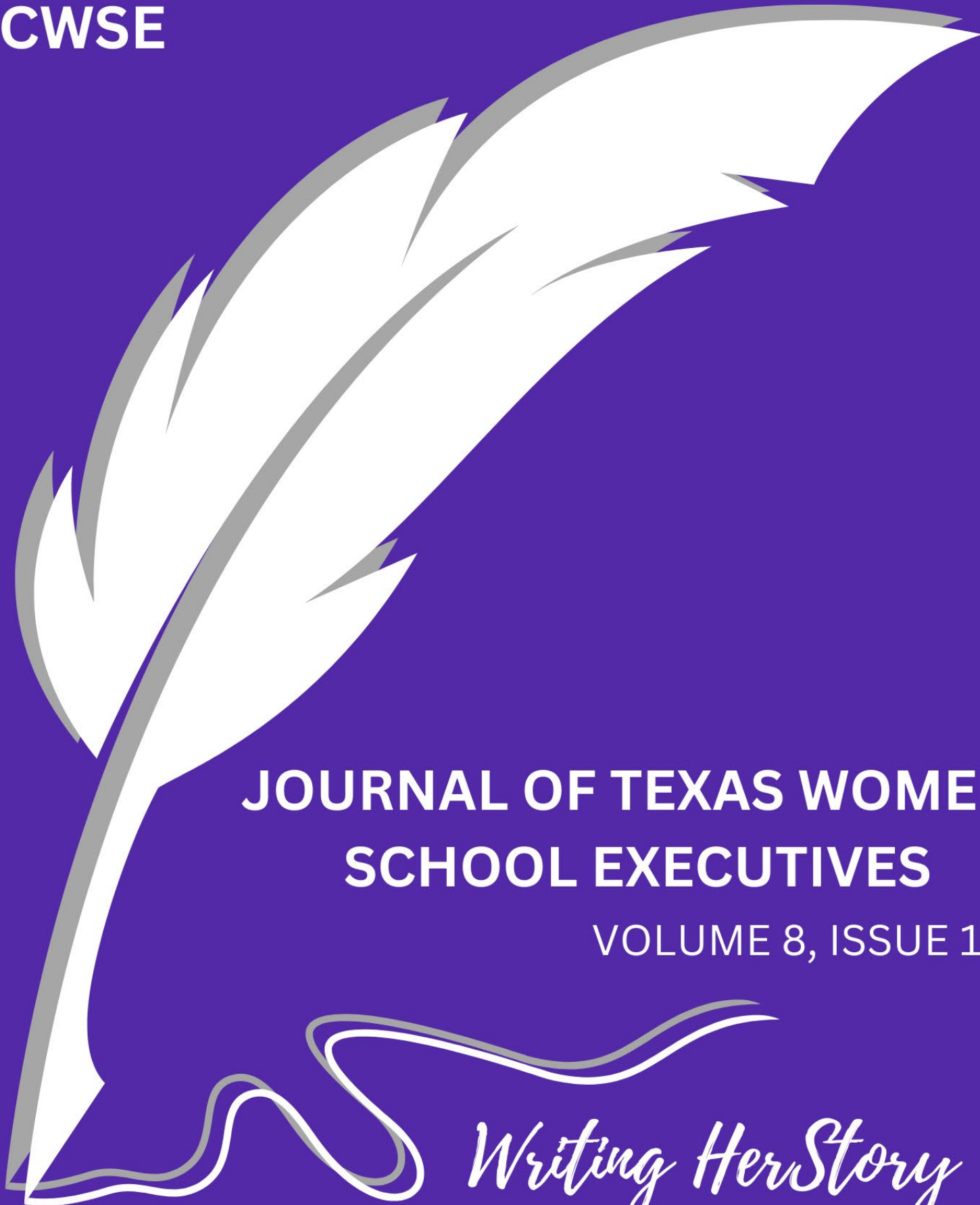# JOURNAL OF TEXAS WOMEN SCHOOL EXECUTIVES

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

Writing HerStory
Making History

A PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS COUNCIL OF WOMEN SCHOOL EXECUTIVES

The Journal of Texas Women School Executives (JTWSE)

The Journal of Texas Women School Executives (JTWSE) is an official publication of the Texas Council of Women School Executives (TCWSE). The purpose of JTWSE is to provide a forum to promote the development of women school executives through scholarly research and practice, as well as recognize the professional knowledge and wisdom of practicing and aspiring women school executives, higher education faculty, and other significant partners in education. Since leadership is both art and science, JTWSE solicits creative works that promote the journal purpose. The journal solicits original submissions in three categories to recognize the diversity of talents and skills of women school executives (see Categories of Articles).

Because of a commitment to leadership development and scholarly school women executives, Texas Council of School Women School Executives previously published an annual monograph until 2008. In January 2011, President Lu Anna Stephens and the Executive Board, commissioned Dr. Genie Linn and Ms. Karen Saunders to serve as coeditors to design and launch a new professional publication for TCWSE to be published in an electronic format with the first publication to be unveiled at the Annual Conference in January 2012. Currently, Dr. Jennifer Jones and Dr. Sharon Ross serve as Executive Editors.

JTWSE is a double-blind, peer-reviewed, open-access e-journal publishing original scholarly research and creative works. The JTWSE, although originated by Texas women school executives, it serves as a national scholarly journal. For membership information: https://tcwse.org/membership/. At present, all editorial, Board, and reviewer services are provided without cost to JTWSE or its members by volunteer scholars and practitioners.

What a year! As we moved from *"Finding our Joy"* to "*Dream it, Believe it, Claim it, Be it,*" our TCWSE sisters left the 2021 conference on fire! It was amazing to bear witness to all the tweets, posts, emails, texts, and phone calls I received from our sisters earning and gaining promotions to hearing them talk about rebranding themselves for the next phase of their career. It was my honor to be their cheerleader!!

This year we have grown again to almost 600 women in our organization with several regions having great regional meetings and staying connected throughout the year. We were able to meet in person for TCWSE Leadership YOU with our regional representatives and from that networking, over 10 regions now have a social media presence. My vision of going national was met with a resounding YES and an exploratory committee was formed eager to reach out to women leadership across the nation. With that in mind, the Research on Women and Education (RWE), SIG conference was held in Houston, Texas where I invited our TCWSE sisters in Region 4 to sit on a panel to discuss their experiences after the pandemic and how they had to reimagine education. I was in awe of their willingness to participate and share with researchers from across the nation. They were so impressed, they wanted to know more about our organization and some have already joined.

I also reflect on the growth in the area of conducting research. The research that has been done during the conference and published in our JTWSE journal has been recognized and went national as it was accepted not only last year 2022 but this year 2023 as well by the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Our research was chosen out of 10,000 and 11,000 proposals respectively. My writing circle that consists of TCWSE members, Drs. Kelly Brown, Janice L. Taylor, Sharon Ross and myself, presented it at the AERA annual meeting in San Diego, California in 2022, *"Women Superintendent's Perspectives Leading During Challenging Times."* We are looking forward to presenting our latest research *"During Critical Times: The Perceptions of Women in Educational Leadership and Work Satisfaction"* this spring in Chicago, Illinois at AERA. It has already been accepted and presented at the AERA RWE SIG conference and included in this years' JTWSE. One of my research agenda foci is on women in leadership and it's my desire to increase TCWSE membership with more women leaders in higher education.

Our mission: Create and maintain a united community of professional educational executives by promoting equity and quality in leadership through renewal, mentoring, and career advancement support. With this year's theme of *"Making History, Writing HERstory,"* I'm excited to hear more history making stories in 2023. It is my hope that those after me will continue to shine the beacon that will draw more women into leadership and our organization like a moth to a flame. We are stronger together!

Honored to have served as your President,

Kathryn Washington, Ed.D.
TCWSE 2022 President

From the
Executive Editors

Our story is HERstory and HERstory is your story, told and untold
From the past to the present, and well into the future
Read about it, experience it, imagine it, and watch history unfold
HERstory rises up from a little girl's dream,
Into a pathway, into a stream,
Constantly flowing…
Climb aboard, HERstory awaits,
Women School Executives, somewhere in history, you too have a place!

Sharon Ross, Ed.D.

Dear Author's and Conference Attendees,

2023 is here! There have been many leaders among us *Making History & Writing HERstory* throughout 2022! Congratulations to each of you for accomplishing those milestones and successes.

It is true that women have been an instrumental part of the world's history since the beginning of time. We echo author, Jennifer Palmieri (2018), in saying 'don't search for your role in his story (history), write your own' and that is what you will find in reading this issue. The research, perspectives, and creative works are welcoming and inspirational. There are a couple of new perspectives that should serve to promote equity and inclusion of thought. The sound of voice throughout this issue promotes an awareness of our growth and strength. You will find help for your journey if you read with intention.

Bound together, this journal reveals the history of the participating authors and the researched participants who willingly shared their life stories throughout the research projects. May the works within be a motivating factor for you personally and a unit of professional development throughout your organizations. May you find encouragement, tips, and strategies designed to assist in charting our individual but collective futures while building better learning experiences.

Texas Council of Women School Executives provides the Journal of Texas Women School Executives to inspire authors passionate about seeking to understand current issues in education for the purpose of sharing recommendations and ideas toward personal and school improvement. The history of HERstory is painted on a colorful canvas somewhere within each submission. Turn the page. Find the story. Live HERstory, and create your own.

Telling HERstory,

Sharon Ross, Ed.D. & Jennifer S. Jones Ed.D.
Executive Editors

Categories of Articles
Research

is the hallmark of educational professionalism and scholarship. The following articles reflect the scholarship of women school executives from universities and school districts. While university professors research issues that are vital to women as leaders and support women educators, district and campus authors share applied research from their experiences in the field. The Cambridge English Dictionary defines research as a detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover new information or reach a new understanding. May you read with clear vision and understand a new journey requires a fresh faith and a fresh fight to:

- Creatively collaborate with the intent to connect communities, universities, colleges and schools that prepare all students for success
- Intentionally operate as a culturally relevant, data-driven leader
- Collaboratively redesign programs that inspire and propel students beyond their wildest dreams and imagination
- Unapologetically owning a passion and love for the journey and the work required to sustain success
- Continuously advocating for all children
- Consistently providing communication of the organizations vision and work related, including successes along the way

Scholarly research builds leadership capacity and strengthens our voices.

Professional and Scholarly Perspectives

offers research both scholarly positions and professional understandings. The contributors represent the diversity of TCWSE members who are university professors, district administrators, and aspiring administrators. It is critical to include and consider perspectives that offer a view to education from inside hearts and minds of our various levels of leadership. It is with pride that we accept and cherish each life role as more evidence of our amazing capacity for leadership.

Creative Works
Picture this…

We are always inspired and amazed at the creativity of women school executives. To recognize diversity of talents and skills, JTWSE also solicits creative works that promote the journal purpose. Creative works include poetry and artwork.

We are leaders. We are learners. We are women.

Call for Journal Submissions
THEME: Examining the Grit and Grace of Leadership
Submission for 2024 Conference Deadline for Submission: September 30, 2023

The Journal of Texas Women School Executives (JTWSE) is a national double-blind peer reviewed, open access e-journal publishing original scholarly research and creative works. JTWSE is an official publication of the Texas Council of Women School Executives.

Submissions should address the following topics:

- The Grace, Grit, and Pearls of Leadership
- Perceptions of Understanding Grace (In, From, For) School Leadership
- Historical perspectives on pearl formation, leadership development, and the interventions necessary to create both as successful masterpieces
- Leadership in Times of Crisis
- Leadership styles and grit: does experience matter?

Grit has been described as a driver of success and a key component possessed by highly motivated leaders. Further explained, grit is the combination of being consistently committed to accomplish defined goals, and perseverance through effort and determination (Von Culin, Tsukayama, & Duckworth, 2014). Research by Von Culin et al. (2014) discusses the Grit-S scale, 'gritty' leaders, and the difference in motivating factors of those with more grit compared to those with less grit. JTWSE welcomes studies examining grit of women school executives. Of additional interest are articles and research addressing perseverance, confidence, and resilience of women school executives in leadership and particularly findings that explore those topics and suggestions for success relative to crisis leadership. In the current climate of social justice and injustice, political manifestations of unrest, safety concerns, and post-pandemic fears, school leadership must be equipped for crisis leadership. Thus, the need to explore and examine grit, grace, and pearls. Why pearls? Harris, Clark, & Bhagra (2021) conducted a study assessing the characteristics of women leaders in the medical field focused on growth, resilience, inspiration, and tenacity. Like the birth of a leader, the birth of a pearl doesn't happen overnight, it takes time. With both, natural and cultured leaders grow from the right human intervention. Authors are encouraged to provide empirical, historical, and/or action research addressing the theme.

To address the topics described, we welcome single-study investigations, research addressing teaching and learning, educational leadership, policy and finance, school law, and other professional and scholarly perspectives related to the topics above. To recognize the diversity of talents and skills, JTWSE also solicits professional and scholarly perspectives as well as creative works that promote the journal's purpose. Creative works include poetry and artwork. Submissions must be in APA, 7th edition format prior to being sent to a reviewer.

Submitting Manuscripts/Submissions to JTWSE Manuscripts and submissions should be sent to: sharon.ross@tamuc.edu

Subject line: JTWSE: Conference 2024 Issue

Each submission is reviewed by the editors and evaluated as appropriate for review and then sent to reviewers for double-blind peer review. Editorial decisions will be made typically within four to

six weeks after receipt.

Manuscripts should follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th Edition. The typical article submission is equivalent to 5 to 15 pages single-spaced. If selected, you may be asked to revise and re-submit. It is the responsibility of the author to adhere to deadlines provided at that time. Please be sure to carefully read all guidelines and prepare accordingly prior to submission.

Document Preparation

Your manuscript/submission should consist of the following:

- Cover Sheet – Title and information of authorship, name of the author(s), current position, contact info, and a brief bio for author(s) (no more than 100 words); email address, postal address, phone number.
- Include a statement confirming that the submission has not been published, is not under review for publication, and will not be submitted elsewhere while being considered for approval with JTWSE. In cases in which the research involves human subjects, confirm that the IRB (Institutional Review Board) has exempted the study from any further review or that it has approved the investigation.
- Abstract – Place on a separate sheet. The title should be placed at the top of the page. The text following should be no longer than 200 words and should summarize the purpose, methodology, and findings briefly.
- The body of the paper
- Charts, tables, and/or figures
- In-text citations and list of references in American Psychological Association 7th Edition format
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font
- Single spaced
- One-inch margins
- Do not insert section breaks.

Prospective authors may view copies of past submissions and themes of the JTWSE at tcwse.org

Questions regarding the JTWSE may be directed to Co-Editors.

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Contents

In this Issue

Authors writing HERstory from various educational organizations are represented in this issue.

The year is 2023. In 1995, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission was formed to analyze barriers and hindrances of females and females of color to leadership positions. Where are we and what advancements have been made in breaking The Glass Ceiling? To further advance career opportunities, this research focused on placement trends of Texas principals and informs leaders of the need to establish mentoring programs and networking opportunities for aspiring female high school principals, often an unspoken route to the superintendency.

In the current crisis-stricken environment, there is no question about the increased stressors of job changes and demands. Framed around the resilience theory, this quantitative study took place during the 2022 TCWSE annual conference where participants shared experiences through an electronic survey. Significant to the field of education was understanding how women in leadership perceived their work satisfaction during challenging times and what is withstanding them during this time of 'The Great Resignation' as coined by Dr. Anthony Klotz.

They break the glass ceiling. They experience satisfaction on the job and then along comes burnout. While many leaders attempt to hide their feelings of burnout within what looks like engaged leadership, this research calls for them to have honest conversations and speak out loud about stress and burnout. Burnout is an organizational issue that affects everyone; therefore, school systems should address the root of the problem and find ways to support individuals so they can be the best leader they can be.

While having a conversation with a TCWSE Past President, these authors decided to look at their journey through history and provide a Latina Superintendent leadership perspective, HERstory, based on the actions she, her assistant and others have taken to create a lasting positive culture. It takes competent leadership to champion for all students, expect excellence, carry the banner, and be a merchant of hope. The cultural DNA of the organization begins with the DNA of the leader, communication, and respect.

In higher education, there is very little written about novice faculty and how they should navigate the high expectations of teaching, scholarship, and service. It is important to find ways that women can support and guide other women in academia. The 5 Anchors of Impact (organization, politics, safety and order, traditions, and teaching and learning) are a proven framework for leaders in the development of higher education culture.

RESEARCH

The struggle of the glass ceiling and the unbreakable barrier continues; however, research provides details of trailblazers, breaking through. Continuous mentoring and networking is necessary for aspiring female principals.

The Historical Growth of Women in School Leadership:
Placement Trends of Texas Women *Principals*

Dr. Elsa Villareal, Texas A&M University Commerce

Abstract

Male high school principals surmount the number of female high school principals at both the national and Texas state level. In Texas, women make up the majority of the public-school principal population; nevertheless, their placement is concentrated at the elementary school level. In addition, the ethnic representation of Texas high school women principals is atypical with respect to the ethnic representation of the Texas student population. Implications for educational leaders and aspiring women principals are discussed.

Keywords: Women in school leadership, women principals, Texas women principals

Placement Trends of Texas Women Latina Principals

The struggle for women's equality dates back a century. In 1920, the United States Congress ratified the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote. Decades later, Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act with the intention of protecting historically marginalized groups from discrimination based on gender, race, religion, color, and national origin. The fight for women's equality and equality for women of color continued through the 1990s. The Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991enacted a 21-member bipartisan Federal Glass Ceiling Commission to analyze the barriers and hindrances of the advancement of females and females of color to leadership positions.

The Glass Ceiling is a concept of an unbreakable barrier that keeps people of color and females from rising the steps of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Glass Ceiling Report, 1995). The Commission collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from Chief Executive Officers' surveys (CEOs), five public hearings, and focus groups. The Glass Ceiling identified three levels of barriers: (a) societal barriers, which may be outside the direct control of business; (b) internal structural barriers within the direct control of business; and (c) governmental barriers, such as policies and laws (Department of Labor, 1995). In 1995, the Strategic Plan was presented to the President and Congress, and one of the recommendations included the need for formal mentoring programs to provide females with access to resources, ensuring progress at a rate like their male counterparts. The Glass Ceiling Commission submitted the following recommendations for business, government, and social sectors.

Table 1

Summary of Recommendations of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission

Business sector	Government sector	Societal initiatives
Demonstrate CEO commitment to diversity	Lead by example	Recognize the role of the media
Include diversity in strategic business plans and measure progress for accountability	Strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws	Educate for cultural awareness
Use affirmative action as a tool	Improve data collection	Counsel for careers in business
Select, promote, and retain qualified individuals	Increase disclosure of diversity data	Recognize all potential
Business sector	Government sector	Societal initiatives
Prepare minorities and women for senior positions		Acquire second language proficiency
Educate the corporate ranks		Take a child to workday
Adopt high-performance workplace practices		

Scholars have studied women in leadership positions across organizations to assess the impact of the Glass Ceiling legislation. Some women had already broken through the glass ceiling prior to the inception of The Glass Ceiling Commission, and they are considered trailblazers for women in leadership. Examples of these trailblazers were (a) Victoria Woodhull, the first female presidential candidate in 1872; (b) Madam C. J. Walker, aka Sarah Breedlove, the first self-made millionaire in 1910; (c) Frances Perkins, the first woman appointed to Secretary of Labor by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933, and (d) Katherine Graham, the first female Fortune 500 CEO in 1963 (Stoller-Lindsey, 2017).

Meanwhile, many women experienced challenges in breaking through the glass ceiling. For instance, in 2017, only 5% of Fortune 500 CEOs, 8% of U.S. governors, and 19% of U.S. Congress were female (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2018). Despite the recommendations of the Glass Ceiling Commission in 1995, organizations continued to lack female representation in the senior ranks of corporate executives and leadership positions in the United States through the next decades, and this situation proliferated into the 2010s (Adams et al., 2009; DeSilver, 2018). The inconsistency of employed women across leadership labor sectors has prompted researchers to study possible

barriers to women's advancement into these leadership roles. Some of these possible barriers include conscious and unconscious biases, lack of mentality to pursue leadership, lack of mentors,

lack of policies that support work-life balance, work-life integration challenges, and lack of networking opportunities and resources (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017).

U.S. Women in Educational Leadership

The most saturated female labor sector is education, with the largest share of women workers being preschool/kindergarten teachers (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). Concerning educational leadership positions, U.S. women have traditionally dominated the elementary school principal role, while men dominated the secondary school and high school principal role. For example, between 1900 and 1950, women led over two-thirds of U.S. elementary schools but were excluded from higher paying high school principal positions (Rousmaniere, 2013). Since the 1950s, women have remained a minority in high school principalship.

Women are traditionally underrepresented in administrative roles despite their overrepresentation in high school and elementary teaching positions (Johnson et al. 2008). An example of the overrepresentation of female teachers in high school and elementary teaching positions and the inconsistency in female principal placements is reflected in the labor force demographics of the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) for the years 2017-2018 (Taie & Goldring, 2020). This descriptive data survey was released in 2020 and is updated every two years. The results of the next survey will be released in December 2022. Table 2 contains a demographic overrepresentation of female teachers across all public-school types.

Table 2

National Percentage Distribution of Teachers by Gender and School Type for the Years 2017-2018

School type	Male teachers	Female teachers
Primary	11.4%	88.6%
Middle	27.9%	72.1%
High	40.0%	60.0%
Total	29.7%	70.3%

Note. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

As noted, the school type with the highest teacher female overrepresentation is primary, followed by middle, and finally, high school. Despite the total overrepresentation of female teachers across all school types, the NTPS Survey also contains demographic underrepresentation of female principals at the middle and high school level (Taie & Goldring, 2019). In Table 3, the national percentage distribution of principals by gender and school type is outlined.

Table 3

National Percentage Distribution of Principals by Gender and School Type for the Years 2017-2018

School type	Male principals	Female principals
Primary	33.2%	66.8%
Middle	60.1%	39.9%
High	67.4%	32.6%
Total	56.6%	43.4%

Note. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The 2017-2018 national percentage distribution of teachers and principals by gender and school type bolster the research regarding females outnumbering males in the elementary, middle, and high school teacher, and elementary principal roles. Simultaneously, men outnumber women in the middle and high school principal role. In Tables 1 and 2, the data indicate a problem of female overrepresentation in the teaching profession across all school types but a lack of gender representation in the high school principal role. In conclusion, male high school principals have traditionally outnumbered female high school principals, and at present, male high school principals outnumber female high school principals at the national level.

Texas Principal Gender

In Texas, women make up the majority of the public school principal population; nevertheless, their placement is concentrated at the elementary school level. For the years 2011-2015, the Texas male principal count decreased from 40% to 38%, and the Texas female principal count increased from 60% to 63% (TEA, 2015). As of 2017-2018, the Texas female principal count increased to 65% (TEA, 2018); however, the placement of female Texas principals is not consistent across school types. Figure 1 contains the 2017-2018 Texas Principal Count by School Type for a grand total of 7,435 Texas principals. Of the 7,435 Texas principals, 2,572 (35%) were male and 4,863 (65%) were female. During the 2017-2108 school years, differences in principal gender were found at the elementary and high school levels. First, women exceeded men in the role of Texas elementary school principals by triple. Indeed, an imbalance of male representation at the elementary level was noted. Second, a balanced gender representation was observed at the middle school and junior high school grades, as the gender difference between male and female principals was less than ten in number at the middle school and less than 20 in number at the junior high. Finally, men outmanned women in the role of Texas high school principals by 354 in number (TEA, 2018).

These high school principal gender counts support the research of Fuller et al. (2018) in their examination of the employment of female Texas principals in public schools from 1990 through 2012. Across all Texas geographic locales (large city, large suburban, mid-size suburban, mid-size city, town, and rural), Texas high school female principals were the minority group of principals. Hence, male high school principals have traditionally outnumbered female high school principals up to 2018. This principal count does not include district charter schools, alternative schools, and

Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) campuses. The Texas State Agency (TEA) calculated the principal count and categorized totals into the following school types: (a) Elementary

(Grades PK-5), (b) Elementary/Secondary (Grades PK-12), (c) Middle School (Grades 6-8), (d) Junior High (Grades 6-9), and (e) High School (Grades 9-12).

Figure 1

2017-2018 Principal Counts by School Type and Gender

2017-2018 Texas Principal Count by School Type and Gender

	Elementary PK-5	Elementary/ Secondary PK-12	Middle School Grades 6-8	Junior High School Grades 6-9	High School Grades 9-12
Male	830	167	651	104	820
Female	3500	117	658	122	466
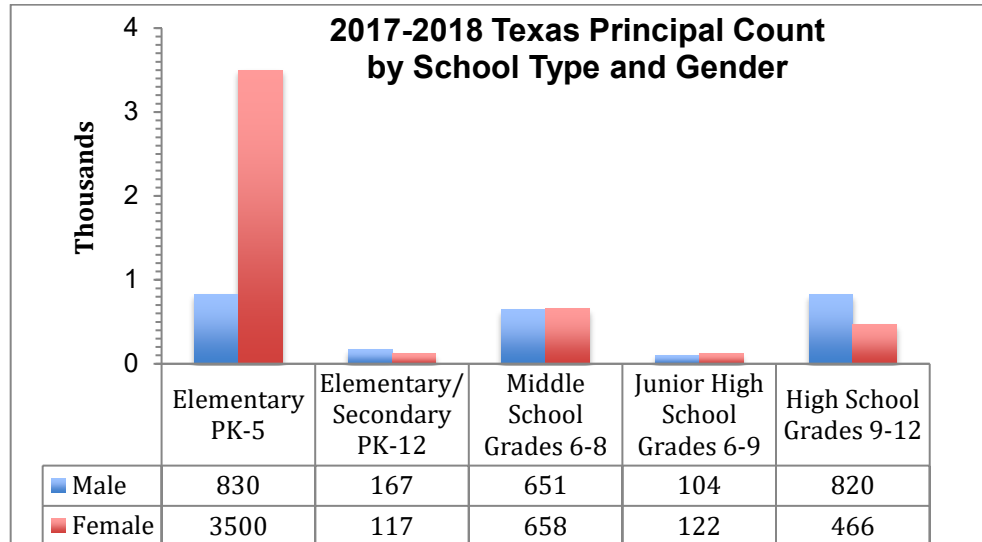
Ethnicity of Texas Principals

In April 2018, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) published a history of Texas public school principal gender and ethnicity demographics for the academic years 2012-2013 through 2016-2017. During this time period, most of the principals were White, with the second and third largest ethnic groups being Latino/a and Black/African American principals (TEA, 2018). The population of Texas principals who identify as White decreased from 65% to 63% (TEA, 2018). Despite the percentage decline for White principals, White remains the majority ethnic group of Texas public school principals (TEA, 2018). The Latino/a principal group increased from 22% to 23%, and the Black/African American principal group increased from 11% to 12% (TEA, 2018). When considering the ethnic principal representation across Texas public schools, Latino/a students account for the largest percentage of total enrollment in 2016-2017 (52.4%), followed by White (28.1%), African American (12.6%), Asian (4.2%), and multiracial (2.2%) students (TEA, 2017). Thus, regarding principal ethnicity and student ethnicity, a racial disparity exists in the number of Texas Latino/a principals serving as role models for Latino/a students, the majority student population.

The racial disparity of Texas principals has been a concern for scholars. Davis (2012) stated the possibility of gender and ethnicity-based bias in the employment of Texas principals. Crawford and Fuller (2017) were concerned that Texas Latino/a educators were placed into assistant principal positions to symbolically address the growing Latino/a student population, perpetuating the notion of Latino/a leaders as primarily disciplinarians under a White principal. They cautioned this phenomenon as a troubling trend and called for further research. Certainly, further research is needed to analyze the ethnic representation of Latino/a principals and their school-type placements. Table 4 contains the 2017-2018 Texas principal ethnicity count by gender and school type (TEA, 2018).

Table 4

2017-2018 Texas

School Principal Count by School Type, Ethnicity, and Gender

School type	Ethnicity	Male count	Female count	Total counts
Elementary (PK-5)	American Indian or Alaska Native	3	7	10
	Asian	13	17	30
	Black or African American	91	410	501
	Latino/a	244	932	1176
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	3	14	17
	Two or more races	9	27	36
	White	467	2093	2560
Elementary and secondary (PK-12)	American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0
	Asian	0	0	0
	Black or African American	9	3	12
	Latino/a	11	17	28
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	0	0	0
	Two or more races	1	1	2
School type	Ethnicity	Male count	Female count	Total counts
	White	146	96	242
Middle school (6-8)	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2	3
	Asian	3	1	4
	Black or African American	62	92	154
	Latino/a	144	148	292
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	1	3	4
	Two or more races	7	13	20
	White	433	399	832
Junior high (6-9)	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2	3
	Asian	0	0	0
	Black or African American	15	19	34
	Latino/a	18	19	37
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	0	2	2
	Two or more races	0	3	3
	White	70	77	147
High school (9-12)	American Indian or Alaska Native	4	1	5
	Asian	4	1	5
	Black or African American	80	59	139
	Latino/a	147	114	261
	Native-Hawaiian/Pacific	1	3	4
	Two or more races	5	0	5
	White	579	288	867
Grand totals		2572	4863	7435

One can infer that the gender and ethnicity representation of all female principals is higher at the elementary level in comparison to the high school. For example, White women accounted for 48% of the elementary principal population followed by Latina women (22%) and African American/Black women (9%) respectively. White men made up only 11% of the elementary principal population next to Latino men (6%) and African American or Black men (2%). However, White male principals comprised 51% of the PK-12 school type. At the middle school and junior high, female and male principals were within three percentage points in gender difference across White, Latino/a, and African American/Black ethnicities. The gender and ethnicity differences at the high school level are discussed in detail in the Gender and Ethnicity of Texas High School Principals section. In summary, Texas female principals were abundant in number in comparison to male principals, but they were not distributed equally across school types with respect to their gender and ethnicity.

Gender and Ethnicity of Texas High School Principals

For the purpose of this study and in the interest of analyzing Texas high school female principals by ethnicity and by school type, the results of the TEA public information request encompassed 4,863 Texas female principals (TEA, 2018). Out of the 4,863 Texas K-12 female principals, 466 (36%) female principals were employed at the high school level. White women were the majority ethnicity (22%) followed by Latina women (9%) and Black/African American women (5%). The number counts of Texas high school principals (grades 9-12) by gender and ethnicity are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2

2017-2018 High School Principal Count by Gender and Ethnicity

	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African-American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native-Hawaiian /Other Pacific	Two or more races	White
Male	4	4	80	147	1	5	579
Female	1	1	59	114	3	0	288
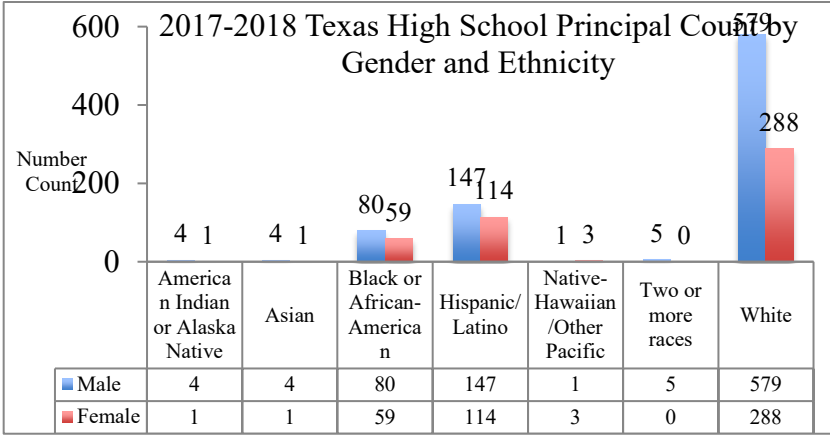
Texas high school female principals remain a minority in comparison to male high school principals. Specifically, men made up 64% of the total high school principal population, and 45% of these men were of White ethnicity. High school Latino men represented 11% of the high school principal population, and only 9% of the high school principal population consisted of Latina women. Notably, the 9% of high school Latina principals do not reflect the total Latino/a student population (52.4%) across Texas public schools (TEA, 2017). Consequently, this ethnic disparity can disrupt the diversity in school leadership and deny Latino/a students an adult role model with whom they can identify, racially and ethnically (Tayloe, 2016).

Problem Statement

Male high school principals surmount the number of female high school principals at both the national and Texas state level. Demographic data presented as evidence of this gender difference has been previously mentioned and referenced from The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS, 2017) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2018). In addition, the ethnic representation of Texas Latino/a principals is atypical with respect to the Latino/a student population. For example, in the 2001-2002 school year, the number of Latino students (41.7%) surpassed the number of White students (40.9%) for the first time, becoming the largest enrolled ethnic group in Texas (TEA 2003; TEA, 2017). Also, within a ten-year span, between 2006-2007 and 2016-2017, the number of Texas Latino/a students increased by 32% (681,739 students) as the number of White students declined by 8.1% (133,216 students) (TEA, 2017). Undeterred by the increase of Latino/a students, White principals remained the largest ethnic group of Texas high school principals. Hence, research into the placement of Texas high school female principals is crucial to the academic success of Latino/a students. Magdaleno (2004) stated Latino/a teachers and school district administrators could serve as role models, building relationships with Latino/a students and ensuring Latino/a student success. Santiago (2009) argued the growth of Latina principals should reflect the growth of the Latino population because Latino/a students need to observe and interact with role models who are representative of their cultural groups.

The Dominant Culture

Almost two decades ago, Gardiner et al. (2000) perceived the dominant culture of educational administration as a White, male-dominated culture. This perspective has shaped the policy and practice in school culture, influencing students of color. Latinas seeking to lead secondary schools were told they were not the right fit (Gardiner et al., 2000; Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Tallerico, 2000). Social and political standards are also based on this norm, and individuals who are not part of this norm are often marginalized (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). For this reason, the right fit is subjective and is shaped by the dominant culture. Quilantán and Menchaca-Ochoa (2004) argued that the *good old boy* network impeded the possibilities for females in leadership roles. They referred to this impediment as a suppressor, keeping females from attaining administrative positions in the educational and corporate worlds. Carrillo (2008) reported Latina female assistant principals have been overlooked for principal positions due to gender and ethnic discrimination. He explained how Latina female assistant principals were not given the same duties as their male counterparts. As a result, these Latinas were perceived as less capable and experienced prejudice against their ethnicity. Hence, this White male-dominated culture is difficult for aspiring Latina principals to navigate the political and hidden culture of educational administration. As well, R. Fernandez (2013) agreed gender was a factor in acquiring principal positions, sometimes more than being Latino/a. Inci and Parker (2013) defined networking within the favorable group as *old boy* networks, where informal groupings of individuals, through personal and business interactions, provide referrals about co-members to third parties. Individuals outside of this network do not benefit from these referrals, and they are marginalized by not belonging to this network.

Discussion

I reviewed the historical context surrounding the struggle for women's equality. Historical milestones such as, the Nineteenth Amendment confirming women the right to vote, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the formation of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission from Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, have unveiled lack of female representation in leadership across U.S.

workforce sectors. I further exhibited labor force demographics from the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey and indicated U.S. women have traditionally dominated the elementary school principal role, while men dominated the secondary school and high school role. Additionally, I utilized Texas Education Agency (TEA) principal gender counts to confirm Texas female principals were disproportionately concentrated at the elementary school level while men surpassed women in the role of Texas high school principal. Finally, I revealed the disparity of Texas high school Latina principal counts in comparison to the state's total Latino student population.

The high school principal position is considered the unspoken training ground to the superintendency and is also favored in comparison to the elementary principalship due to the complexity of its role (Tallerico, 2000). For example, Yong-Lyun Kim and Brunner (2009) studied the career pathways for females in educational administration and found male administrators moved up vertically via high school principal to the superintendency, while females traveled horizontally to the superintendency through central office staff roles. In addition, some of the complexities with the high school principal role include the administration of severe disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and expulsions, and navigation of political currents at high visibility/high media events, such as athletics, prom, and graduation. Men have traditionally filled the high school principal role, and as previously stated, female principals were not placed consistently across public school types. Educational leaders can use the results of this study to reevaluate their leadership mentoring programs and increase their recruitment of female principals for high school principal positions. Since mentoring programs traditionally have benefited White males in leadership positions (Méndez-Morse, 2004), females of all races and cultural backgrounds would be able to benefit from someone who can connect, teach, and support their career advancement.

Implications for Latina High School Principals

As previously stated, the 1991 Federal Glass Ceiling Commission reported the need for formal mentoring programs to provide women with access to resources, ensuring progress at a rate like their male counterparts. Thus, the demographic data from this study can inform school districts of the importance of establishing strategic mentoring programs and networking opportunities targeted for aspiring female high school principals.

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Women leader participants from a 2022 TCWSE research project perceived their job fit, ability, and commitment to the leadership role with high regard. This study is significant to the field of understanding how women in leadership perceive their work satisfaction during challenging times.

During Critical Times: The Perceptions of Women in Educational Leadership and Work Satisfaction

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Abstract

The term "The Great Resignation" was coined last year by Dr. Anthony Klotz, an organizational psychologist and professor at Texas A&M University. During these critical times, he stated that educators had an epiphany and a moment of reflection which led many to re-think where, how and why they work (Cohen, 2021). National Education Association (NEA) (2022) reported that approximately 55% of educators are more likely to voluntarily resign to pursue other careers or retire early. The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the lived experiences of current and/or aspiring women in leadership based on their work satisfaction. This study found that the women perceived their job fit, ability and commitment to the leadership role with high regard. However, some perceived concerns with the compatibility of work and home behaviors. During these critical times in education, the results could be attributed to women in leadership resilience.

During Critical Times: The Perceptions of Women in Educational Leadership and Work Satisfaction

In the current crisis-stricken environment, there is no question that increased stressors of job changes and demands were creators of helplessness causing many leaders to experience the unexpected, including fear, irritability, uncertainty, extreme fatigue, and emotional discomfort. The stress and anxiety from the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected not only children and their families, but school administrators, educational leaders, and professors (Karakose, et.al, 2021). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2022), approximately 1.5 billion students worldwide shifted to virtual learning at the pandemic's peak. Educators became fundamental workers, needing to adapt to the continually evolving environment, upskilling, and reskilling. Today, the vast majority of schools reopened, but how has this impacted the workforce more specifically administrators?

The term "The Great Resignation" was coined last year by Dr. Anthony Klotz, an organizational psychologist, and professor at Texas A&M University. He stated that educators had an epiphany and a moment of reflection which led many to re-think where, how and why they work (Cohen, 2021). National Education Association (NEA) (2022) reported that approximately 55% of educators are more likely to voluntarily resign to pursue other careers or retire early.

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experiences of current and/or aspiring women in leadership based on their work satisfaction. The researchers hope to understand how women and/or aspiring women in leadership perceive their job fit and ability, commitment to the leadership role and job satisfaction, and compatibility of work and home behaviors. The following research

questions guided this study:

- What is the relationship between women in leadership and their perceptions of ability to perform the work?

- What is the relationship between women in leadership and their perceptions of commitment to the work?

- What is the relationship between women in leadership and their perceptions of the compatibility of work/home behaviors?

Literature Review

Women in Leadership and Job Satisfaction

In 2011, Dufour and Marzano defined the best educational leaders as those who were in love with their work and the people whom they lead and serve each day. That love is the passion that fuels perseverance and performance during difficult times. Learning not only how to persevere, but how to thrive is crucial on the pathway to understanding how to deal with the five percent of the job that stands to throw adversity as a roadblock. Siler (2020), a former Texas female superintendent, provided suggestions to create pathways to better outcomes and opportunities for success. Women leaders are increasingly gaining power in various areas of educational organizations and one of the most essential aspects of job performance is job satisfaction, (Jackson, et. al., 2014). Job satisfaction becomes the link to positive organizational outcomes. Quality student achievement and school success are dependent on the effectiveness of leadership at all levels in all educational settings. It is no surprise that in today's climate, and during critical times, regardless of the year, job satisfaction can be influenced in both negative and positive ways. Studies dating from 2000 to 2009 have shown that leadership styles, approaches, and skills had increased effects on job satisfaction, a positive and pleasant state of mind, and emotional disposition based on job experiences (Munir & Iqbal, 2018). In their study of leadership styles of principals and job satisfaction of teachers in colleges for women, Munir and Iqbal (2018) asserted positive outcomes regarding job satisfaction occurred in workplaces where a democratic leadership style was present, while laissez-faire leadership had negative outcomes. Walsh (2006) defined resilience as one's capacity to become strengthened in adversity; however, it was Patterson and Kelleher (2005) who defined and shared resilience as using your energy productively as you rose from the challenges and obstacles stronger than before. In 2009, school leaders were considerably satisfied with their jobs, according to Hulpia and Devos (2009).

Job Satisfaction

While school leaders were considerably satisfied in 2009 with their jobs, the increasing changes to the role of women in leadership have been further compounded by obstacles over the last decade, namely from the last two years. In addition to Klotz's notion of 'The Great Resignation,' a Texas Association of School Boards HR Services consultant, Nicole Gee-Guzman (2022) predicted a wave of superintendent resignations defining them as the COVID19 Pandemic "Superintendent Exodus" born from survey results conducted by the RAND corporation. The resignations occurred and it is believed the pandemic was in part responsible for some of the shortages facing districts causing additional workloads for superintendents (Gee-Guzman, 2022), and women in leadership.

Further, it should be noted that Hind (2015), maintained that women judge themselves differently when making assessments of their performance on the job; therefore, job satisfaction could be

based on confidence (or lack of) for some and cognitive complexity for others. As they judge their performance to determine job satisfaction, challenges such as pandemic health crises, longer working hours, learning deficits, and mental health cases related to traumatic experiences of COVID-19 become considerations for remaining in the role or leaving the profession (McMurdock, 2022). Disruptions to the role of women in leadership could negatively impact job satisfaction, although, leaders who characterize themselves as optimistic, see adversity as challenges and opportunities. Siler (2020) maintains that opportunities exist to learn, grow, reflect and be better because women should not define themselves by our failures. Optimistic leaders, according to Patterson and Kelleher (2005) apply resiliency strengths and are more likely to succeed. Resiliency leaders possess six strengths. They (1) accurately assess the past and current realities and expect the world to have disruptions, (2) positively focus on possibilities and maintain a positive perspective (3) remain true to personal values stay focused on being value-driven (4) maintain personal efficacy and recover quickly from setbacks (5) invest their personal energy wisely while renewing physical energy and mental focus, and (6) act on courage and what matters most.

Combining Siler's (2020) tips on how to thrive with implications for practice and future studies from Bollinger and Grady (2018), women leaders can enjoy rewarding positions in leadership at various levels. Bollinger and Grady (2018) examined women superintendents across five states to study job satisfaction from their experiences. The results of the surveys indicated the participants were highly satisfied. Many described their work as rewarding and very satisfying (Bollinger & Grady 2018). The six strengths described by Patterson and Kelleher were noted in different areas of the Bollinger and Grady research. High levels of job satisfaction were reported in the conclusions as they reiterated the need to find balance, as seen in the strengths of resilient leaders. With these strengths, women leaders can thrive through the hardest part, grow, reflect, and from resilient strength, find job satisfaction in their current and future roles. After all, job satisfaction is a key link to successful outcomes for leaders and others in educational spaces.

Challenges, Perceptions, and Fit of Women in Leadership

Women in leadership positions, regardless of the field, preparation, or position have been historically faced with challenges associated with cultural expectations of women in society and the workplace, gender stereotyping, and personal and family commitments. Each of these constructs and associated challenges impact how women perceive their abilities to perform the work required of their position. Hochschild (1983) stated that working women have historically expended a tremendous amount of emotional energy to achieve preconceived expectations and societal norms for their workplace behavior.

Cultural Expectations and Gender Stereotyping

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, women were considered threatening and less likable than their male counterparts in typical gender-biased organizations, if they displayed confidence in their tone when speaking (Carli, et. al., 1995). In a study conducted by Lewis (2000), male managers who sounded angry when confronted with challenges were considered competent. However, there were obviously different considerations of women managers who sounded angry when handling difficult situations. Women were perceived less favorably. Women are expected to be warm, patient, empathetic, and nurturing in their tone; social norms do not permit women to show too many emotions, such as anger or anxiety, as men can do within the workplace (Vroman & Danko, 2020). In times such as the current pandemic, however, women leaders who can connect emotionally have proven to be effective (Vroman & Danko, 2020).

It is also not acceptable for women to highlight their accomplishments in the workplace. It makes them less attractive and hirable, which was the perception of both male and even some female participants in a study conducted by Rudman (1998). Grenny and Maxfield (2015) revealed in their study that women who were perceived to be assertive or violate stereotypical norms in the workplace were not desirable as supervisors and were penalized with lower compensation of over $15,000.00. While a woman's gender does not impact her leadership capability, cultural expectations and other societal restrictions might potentially impact how she is evaluated (Cheng & Lin, 2012), thus the perception of a woman's own ability to effectively perform her work might become a barrier or hindrance to what she can accomplish.

Personal and Family Commitments

Some research demonstrates concerns that work-life conflicts affect women's career choices and prevent them from seeking leadership roles (Hakim, 2006; Lyonette, 2015; Tomlinson, 2006). Women experience greater conflict and consequences when balancing family and work responsibilities than men (Bosak et al., 2012). Integrating both can be challenging and often requires a choice between one or the other - either work or family life. Work-family conflicts for women include examples such as taking breaks from employment for family reasons for maternity leave or caring for a sick child. The demonstration of this traditional female value of caring for others can result in financial penalties or losses that may never be regained (Jacobsen & Levin, 1995). Gaps in experience are also a cost for women faced with these choices or conflicts. However, Turesky and Warner (2020) concluded from their study that workplaces with female management are more likely to show sensitivity to gender issues, support for flexible benefits, and equal opportunity for pay and advancement, which may positively impact women's perceptions about their capabilities to perform their job duties in positions of leadership.

Perceptions of Women and Organizational Fit

In a 1997 study conducted by Cafferella et al., the researchers found that women demonstrated leadership styles that reflect qualities specific to women. However, women are remarkably unaware of the qualities they possess to be effective and appropriate leaders (Grant, 1988). These qualities include affiliation, attachment, cooperativeness, nurturance, and emotionality (Grant, 1998). This lack of awareness by women may negatively impact their perceptions of their abilities to perform the job of a leader. Strong (1994) found that women have more highly developed intuitive knowledge than men.

To experience "fit" within an organization and give themselves permission to celebrate their accomplishments, it is vitally important for women to surround themselves with those who will encourage them to develop at their maximum potential (Inman, 1998). Inman further suggests that women have multiple mentors, seek resources within their own cultivated community, and take the time to customize career options through creativity and innovation. By implementing these recommendations, women leaders will define their own "fit" within the organization.

Organizational Commitment – Compliance

Commitment determines a habit or agreement between members of the organization with the leadership of a rule that gives hope to a set of agreements, beliefs, values, and norms that have been jointly used by members in an organization (Newstrom, 2007). It has been ascertained that the word commitment is related to the results of the target people who internally agree with a decision or request from a particular party and try their best to implement it, there is acceptance or

implementation of that decision. From the sense of belonging and living the goals of the organization and the awareness of carrying out the policies of the leadership, which leads to the manifestation of high dedication in the work.

According to Luthans (1992), clarifying the meaning and role of organizational commitment, other researchers found 4 factors: a) personal factors, such as age, gender, education level, work experience and personality, b) job characteristics such as scope position, challenges at work, role conflict, level of difficulty at work, c) characteristics of the structure, for example, the size of the organization, the shape of the organization, the presence of trade unions, and the level of control exercised by the organization of employees. A highly committed individual will see themselves as a true member of the organization, and to be a long-term person of the organization. On the other hand, an individual who has a lower commitment is more likely to see themselves as an outsider, and they do not want to see themselves long-term as part of the organization, according to Luthans (2011).

The description above raises the following points: (1) affective commitment includes having the pride of being part of the organization, (2) continuing commitment includes strong willingness to enter or be bound by the organization, a high business will for the organization, loyal to the organization, and (3) normative commitment includes a strong willingness to be part of the organization, wanting to continue work because it feels part of its obligations (Setyawati, et. al., 2020). Individuals who are highly dedicated are undoubtedly able to see themselves as true members of the organization and consider themselves to be long-term members of the organization.

Commitment is seen as a result or socialization of the organization, so that workplace ties that are deeper than this type can take more processing time, work- place commitments have been dominantly studied as a state without the time and therefore, we know very little about how commitments develop over time. (Van Rossensberg et.al, 2018). Based on the description above, it can be synthesized that organizational commitment is the desire to keep working and participating to be actively involved in the vision of the organization, the desire to continue working in the organization, and the desire to remain accountable to the organization.

Work-Family Conflict – Behavior

Stephens and Somers (1996) in their work assessed work conflicts that may also affect home. Work–family balance is defined as the "accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains" (Carlson, et.al., 2009, p. 5; Fan, 2018). This research is of importance to women in leadership fields.

The notion of the 'glass ceiling' as the barrier to achieving the same recognition and accolades as men (Inman, 1998). Research has established that work-family conflict is greater for women than men (Beddoes & Pawley, 2014). Even looking beyond racial and ethnic factors gender remains a predictive determining factor for women's progression, success, and happiness in a field (Beddoes & Pawley, 2014). But the work-family conflict and the notion of the 'glass ceiling' is all viewed from a male-centered and mostly western perspective (Inman, 1998; Fan, 2018).

Understanding from the perception of women how work-family conflict manifests in a leadership role is of importance to current and aspiring women in leadership. It has been well researched (Philipsen 2008; Wolfinger, et.al., 2008; Fox, et.al., 2011; Morrison, Rudd and Nerad 2011) that women and men both struggle with work-life balance. However, women specifically, feel the

outsized effects of parenting and household responsibilities in their professional lives (Rosenfeld & Jones, 1987; Wolf-Wendel, et. al., 2000; Stone & Lovejoy 2004). Certain behaviors are deemed more appropriate or acceptable for men than women, such as politics (Morrison, et. al., 1987; Inman, 1998). This phenomenon has been attributed to traditional gendered stereotypes (Fleming, et.al., 2020). Haines et al. (2016) address how the male's sense of agency and the female's association with communality. assign more communality to influence expectations.

The additional tasks related to family and home are more heavily borne by women as opposed to men (Beddoes & Pawley, 2014). Partly because men will have additional support from family and home that do not hinder their career trajectory (Beddoes & Pawley, 2014). For instance, more women will experience a career interruption to move with a spouse. One researcher showed that in academia this career interruption will impact women's ability to obtain tenure. Despite the abundance of information on the disproportionality of work-family balance, it "is a significant factor in predicting work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or turnover intention (Fan, 2018, p. 997; Carlson et al., 2009; Lu, et.al., 2009). However, organizations that have a family supportive culture, "could also contribute to both work and family roles and enrichment (Fan, 2018, p. 997; Allen, 2001; Lapierre et al., 2008; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

Theoretical Framework

Multiple definitions of the word resilience exist. Walsh (2006) defined resilience as one's capacity to become strengthened and more resourceful when faced with adversity and responding to challenges. Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) referred to resilience as positively adapting within the context of significant adversity. Further, the ability to be successful despite exposure to high risks while overcoming adversity, was defined as resilience by Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky (1999). For this study, a combination of the definitions described above was used to define resilience and therefore be applied. Thus, resilience is having a set of qualities that allows one to adapt successfully when faced with adversity and responding to challenges (Washington, et. al, 2021).

Polidore (2004) conducted a qualitative study on resilience with three retired schoolteachers where she examined their experiences during their careers in education. The study was conducted in the rural South for the purpose of gaining perspective and seeking a deeper understanding about how the women sustained their long careers while teaching in the segregated South and the adverse conditions surrounding that era in history. Eight themes emerged from Polidore's study as qualities of resilience that sustained the women during their long teaching careers and include the following: religion, flexible locus of control, an individual's ability to view adverse situations positively or optimistic bias, autonomy, commitment, change, positive relations, and education viewed as important. Polidore's findings led to the development of Resilience Theory, an original theory about resilient educators.

Methodology

A quantitative approach was selected for this study. Quantitative research gathers a range of numeric data. Some of the numeric data is intrinsically quantitative, while in other cases the numeric structure is imposed. Coghlan and Brydon-Miller (2014) noted that the collection of quantitative information allows researchers to conduct simple to extremely sophisticated statistical analyses that aggregate the data, show relationships among the data or compare across aggregated data.

This study took place during the 2022 Texas Council of Women School Educators annual conference in the form of an electronic survey on a 7-point Likert scale. The female participants (N=191) took an electronic survey and basic demographics were collected. Each participant was either a current or aspiring woman in leadership in the state of Texas during the 2021-2022 academic year. The researchers chose a quantitative approach to effectively address the questions that guided the study using combined surveys that explored work satisfaction with job fit, organizational commitment, and work-family conflict (Fields, 2013).

Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) instrument, descriptive statistical analysis was utilized to generate results to determine the relationship between women in educational leadership positions and job satisfaction from attendees at the conference. The participants of this study shared their experiences that will be added to the knowledge base for future women leaders as they encounter challenges in the various educational leadership positions.

Summary of Findings

Overall results

The survey results were very interesting based on the topics our participants most strongly disagreed with the statement that said, 'Unless I am rewarded for it in some way, I see no reason to expend extra effort on behalf of the organization." Out of all the participants, this question had a mean average of 5.50 as they disagreed. Individuals who are highly dedicated are undoubtedly able to see themselves as true members of the organization and seek to be actively involved in the vision of the organization. The desire to continue working in the organization and the desire to remain accountable to the organization drives many of these women to become leaders that can have sustainability during a crisis.

The question that participants least disagreed with was "Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at work would be counter-productive at home." This was an interesting statement because more women than not disagreed with the thought that their behavior at work could not translate effectively in their personal lives. There has been more than one question in our study that suggests that women feel they must maintain two different sets of behavior in order to make work and home successful.

However, participants most agreed with the question, the problem-solving approaches I use in my job are effective in resolving problems at home. This represents many of the women in the study that see problem-solving as a strength and know that skill is transferable to home and work. While their skill set is transferable, many behaviors are not.

Overall, the final question that had the least agreement was, "I feel competent and fully able to handle my job." This was striking coming from a pool of current and/or aspiring leaders. Many women despite a title feel like they are not prepared for the job at hand. Some of this can be attributed to the timing of the survey being conducted during the pandemic and on the heels of out-of-building schooling. But the results show that in whatever capacity, improvements in training or feelings of self-efficacy would be beneficial for women leaders as they continue into leadership (See Table 1).

Table 1 Survey Questions and Means: Overall

Mean	Question
5.5026	Unless I am rewarded for it in some way, I see no reason to expend extra effort on behalf of this organization.
4.6754	The problem-solving approaches I use in my job are effective in resolving problems at home.
4.5916	The things I do that make me effective at work also help me to be a better parent and spouse.
4.4660	What works for me at home seems to be effective at work as well, and vice versa.
4.4188	My private views about this organization are different from those I express publicly.
4.1937	I act differently in responding to interpersonal problems at work that I do at home.
4.1675	How hard I work for this organization is directly linked to how much I am rewarded.
4.0262	For me to get rewarded around here, it is necessary to express the right attitude.
3.9686	My job gives me a chance to do the things I feel I do best.
3.9372	I am not able to act the same way at home as at work.
3.9215	Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at work would be counter-productive at home.
3.8272	I feel I have adequate preparation for the job I now hold.
3.7958	I feel that my work utilizes my full abilities.
3.5079	I feel that my job and I are well matched.
3.1990	I feel competent and fully able to handle my job.

Person-Organization Fit – Perceived Ability – Job Fit Survey Questions Analysis

Five questions in the survey pertained to an individual's perception of their ability and of their job within an organization. As indicated in Table 2, of 191 survey participants, question #3 had the highest mean (3.96) and clearly showed that the women in the survey perceived that their job provides them with opportunities to perform functions in their areas of strength. The results for survey question #1 support and complement question #3 in that participants perceive that they are able to use all of their skills and abilities to perform the duties of their position. However, the mean of 3.5 for question #4, as it relates to job match, does not align with or contradict the responses to questions #1 and #3. There is somewhat of an interesting discrepancy in how the participants perceive utilizing their abilities, receiving opportunities to use their abilities, and their match to the job.

Additionally, based on a mean of 3.19 for question 5, survey participants did not feel they received adequate preparation to perform the functions of their current position. Question #2 pertained to the perceived competence of the individuals in the survey and their ability to handle their job. The mean for question #2 was 3.19. Survey participants do not perceive they are competent in fulfilling the duties of their job. When comparing the results between questions #5 and #2, the data suggests a correlation between the responses, or at minimum, an inference between the responses might be made. Participants do not feel competent to perform the duties of their job because of inadequate preparation.

Table 2 Survey Questions and Means: Person-Organization Fit

Mean	Question
3.7958	I feel that my work utilizes my full abilities.
3.1990	I feel competent and fully able to handle my job.
3.9686	My job gives me a chance to do the things I feel I do best.
3.5079	I feel that my job and I are well matched.
3.8272	I feel I have adequate preparation for the job I now hold.

Organizational Commitment – Compliance Survey Questions Analysis

There were four questions on the survey that questioned the participants' organizational commitment to their current organization. Overall, they disagree with the organizational commitment - compliance part of the survey as an indicator of their job satisfaction. The strongest disagreement was with statement #9, "Unless I am rewarded for it in some way, I see no reason to expend extra effort on behalf of this organization." Furthermore, they least agreed with statement #7, "For me to get rewarded around here, it is necessary to express the right attitude." (See Table 3) This implies that these women leaders are committed to the educational leadership purpose which is to improve the quality of education and the education system itself and not commitment to one organization.

Table 3 Survey Questions and Means: Organizational Commitment – Compliance

Mean	Question
5.5026	How hard I work for this organization is directly linked to how much I am rewarded.
4.4188	For me to get rewarded around here, it is necessary to express the right attitude.
4.1675	My private views about this organization are different from those I express publicly.
4.0262	Unless I am rewarded for it in some way, I see no reason to expend extra effort on behalf of this organization.

Work-Family Conflict – Behavior Survey Questions Analysis

Six questions in the survey directly related to work/family conflict (Table 4). Based on these questions, the researchers were able to draw some interesting conclusions. First of all, the question that had the highest mean, related to approaches to solving problems. The participants mostly agreed that the approaches utilized in the work setting are also effective in the home. Noting this agreement, it seems to suggest that women leaders are still poised to be problem solvers in both areas of their lives. As such, the skills acquired to be successful can translate to their personal and professional lives.

Table 4 Survey Questions and Means: Work/Family Conflict

Mean	Question
4.6754	The problem-solving approaches I use in my job are effective in resolving problems at home.
4.5916	The things I do that make me effective at work also help me to be a better parent and spouse.
4.4660	What works for me at home seems to be effective at work as well, and vice versa.
4.1937	I am not able to act the same way at home as at work.
3.9372	I act differently in responding to interpersonal problems at work that I do at home.
3.9215	Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at work would be counter-productive at home.

However, there is an interesting contrast between the previous question and the question that had the lowest mean regarding work/family conflict. The participants had the least amount of agreement that effective behaviors also believe their behaviors effective at work can be counter-productive at home. In other words, leaders did not come to an agreement if their behaviors were able to transfer from work to home. The researchers believe this notion could be further explored because of the difference between the transference of skills and behaviors. Are women leaders not able to truly be authentic in the various contexts while the skills they acquire are valued in both?

It is important to note that in 2022 the education profession is experiencing massive shortages due to various economic, social, and political strains. However, the work-family conflict has "a direct effect on well-being" (Michel, et. al., 2008; Noor, 2011, p. 283). Based on the results of this study, it seems as if greater synchronicity between the work and family roles may lead to better outcomes for current and aspiring women leaders.

Conclusions

This study is significant to the field of understanding how women in leadership perceive their work satisfaction during these challenging times and what is withstanding them during this time of the 'The Great Resignation' as coined by Dr. Anthony Klotz, an organizational psychologist and professor at Texas A&M University (Cohen, 2021). According to this study, it was found that the women that participated perceived their job fit and ability and commitment to the leadership role with high regard. However, there were some perceived hesitation or concerns with the compatibility of work and home behaviors. During these critical and/or challenging times in education, the results could be attributed to women in leadership resilience. According to the Resilience Theory, the behaviors that are critical to their resilience are religion, flexible locus of control, an individual's ability to view adverse situations positively or optimistic bias, autonomy, commitment, change, positive relations, and education viewed as important (Polidore, 2004). This research found that these women perceived they were true members of the organization, committed to the field of education, and had the skills to do the job, even though they felt in certain situations their behaviors were not transferable between work and home life. With the demographics collected, we will continue this study to investigate if there is a significant difference between these women in leadership's perceptions based on race, district types, and years of experience.

As the researchers seek to further understand the relationship between female leaders and the role they perceive they can play in the organization, it is important that research for and with educational leaders can see holistically the truth of their place in the organization and how they can bring their true selves to the work they do. Our research was enlightening due to the fact, there was a mixed bag of opinions and thoughts based on the research questions. However, for those questions that had the most and least agreement, it showed that women leaders: (1) Do not need to be rewarded for their work in the organization; (2) Perceive they have to have different sets of behaviors for work and home; (3) Can be consistent with strategies to solve problems at work and home, which may be a nod to the role women play at work and home; and (4) Do not feel adequately prepared to take on leadership roles. Unpacking these statements in future research will be important to interrogate what the truth in our research reveals about female educational leaders' role and impact in the organization.

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What are the frameworks within schools and school systems that normalize dealing with stress and prevent burnout? The ability to plan for and actively participate in proactive self-care routines and other solutions to prolonged stress is now a paramount need in every district.

Preventing Burnout for Female Campus and District Leaders

Dr. Delic Loyde, TEA – LSG Coach; Loyde Consulting, Retired Educator

Introduction

We all experience it at some time or another. We try to ignore it. We often dismiss it. Yes. Stress. Some level of stress is unavoidable in the workplace and in our very lives. Prolonged stress can be a problem - especially among school leaders. Female school leaders often have the double stressor of work and home, thus making continued stress an inevitability in their daily lives. Prolonged and unmanaged stress often leads to burnout. This unbalanced formula for a lifestyle creates such a negative effect for many female leaders to the point that many female school leaders avoid leadership, are not able to maintain an appropriate balance in their lives or give up without receiving adequate support. The feelings of prolonged stress and the likelihood of imminent burnout among female school leaders are camouflaged in many ways including irritability, assumed incompetence, and negative personality changes or mood swings. These daily challenges and stressors are not new to school or school system leaders, but it is when these challenges are met with a lack of personal control or little opportunity to impact results that school leaders feel additional stress and helplessness. Leadership stressors during and in the present phase of the pandemic are actually compounding the stress of school and district leaders. The daily uncertainty of the workplace exaggerates an already shaky environment. Now as we move forward past the pandemic, stress weighs in at an even deeper level for most school leaders, particularly female school leaders. This is because even before the pandemic, the data showed that stress was a common negative attribute for most female school leaders. The pandemic revealed what was already there for female school leaders - out of control stress resulting in burnout. When will enough be enough?

Burnout seems to be everywhere in today's society. As a nation, we are just tired of being tired. But are we tired enough? Are we tired enough to do something about it? Most school leaders, and especially female school leaders take a "tough it out" approach as if the unrealistic levels of prolonged stress are a job prerequisite. This is particularly true for female school leaders who may not have been appropriately mentored for leadership nor do they have a female school leadership model from which to pull support. While it is true that all stress is not negative, the personal feelings of many female school leaders that may impact their job performance in a negative way are often not immediately revealed and often seen as personal weaknesses by most female school leaders. Prolonged stress and burnout become the silent evaluators that many female school leaders use to confirm their inner thoughts of inadequacy. Workplace stress that leads to burnout shortens the longevity of many female school leaders who have not experienced opportunities to build their personal resilience or are not supported by established effective workplace supports for women in leadership. Current methods of school leader selection and observation of the daily walk of female school leaders do not allow them to become immune to prolonged stress that can result in burnout. The findings from this study are important to the field of research in order to help better prepare female school leaders for their leadership role, to provide adequate organizational support for their success, and to allow for the creation of affordable, solution-oriented interventions for future implementations of support for female school leaders.

Literature Review

Burnout is not new. No, it is not just what we are all feeling as a result of the pandemic. Burnout

has previously not been taken seriously by all, but the numbers of males and females suffering from it and its symptoms are astronomical. The pandemic actually revealed how many of us are actually suffering from some component of burnout. The Six Areas of Worklife model proposed by Leiter & Maslach (1999) are relevant for this study because they provide framework regarding identifying burnout in all individuals. The six areas include: workload, control, reward, community, values and fairness. An imbalance in any of these areas can lead to prolonged stress resulting in burnout.

Looking specifically at female leadership burnout - the topic that many of us are ashamed to discuss and the feelings that we want even more desperately to dismiss - the data is now evident that female leaders are struggling everywhere. You may not notice them at first because they may seem like leaders you know: the super-nurturers, attention to detail gurus, or the always on time fanatics. In reality, however, each of these female leader types may be suffering from an inside battle that they have no idea how to fight. Their battle is with preventing and recovering from stress and burnout as an immediate necessity in their lives.

The latest Women in the Workplace Report (LeanIn.org, 2020) agrees that burnout has increased for both men and women, but that female burnout rates have grown faster. In the past year, the gap between male and female burnout rates has nearly doubled (from 4 to 7 percent), more than one-third of men report burnout, but for women, the burnout percentage is now higher than 40 percent. Burnout is hitting senior level women the hardest, with fully 50 percent saying that they are burned out at work. In 2021, a quarter of women in senior leadership roles said that they wanted to leave the workplace or downshift their careers. Now, the proportion seeking to quit or offload major responsibilities has risen to one in three senior-level women. (LeanIn.org, 2020). It is a fact that some female leader you personally know is experiencing symptoms of burnout and you may not even be aware – this is a fact that can no longer be ignored. We cannot sustain this level of talent drain of female school leadership.

As campus and district leaders, females, just as their male counterparts, have worked hard to attain positions in leadership at the systems level. The last thing that female leaders want to consider is that perhaps personal burnout may be on their horizon and negatively affect their career. Often female leaders work extremely hard to try to cover up the slightest image of stress or burnout from colleagues and employers or admit that workplace stress is having an increasingly negative impact on their daily work efforts. Inner fears of not being able to handle the position or being too soft for leadership positions keep many female leaders silent about their inner thoughts and fears. This situation prevents many female leaders from seeing prolonged stress and burnout as avoidable and dismissing it from being the mental health issue that it truly is before it is too late for them. These feelings of leadership inadequacy coupled with common toxic workplace environmental stressors increase the likelihood that female school leaders will experience burnout, will not develop the skills to recover, and will eventually have to leave the profession.

When you look back on the careers of female school leaders, you will see that most of them have matriculated methodically through the ranks in their district from teacher to the school leadership level. Most female school and district leaders are in the middle aged to early senior age group by the time they even achieve their systems role. Because of this, sometimes additional stressors such as female hormonal changes and other health factors also add to the level of workplace stress and burnout that female school leaders experience. Life changes such as having children, marriage, divorce or remarriage may create additional stressors for women at this critical point in their career. Knowing these potential obstacles and how they could impact the role of female

school leaders, one would think that there would have been preventative formal training regarding avoiding possible stressors of female school leadership. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case.

Historically, a vast amount of research and literature has been examined on burnout and burnout specifically regarding leaders, but this research has mostly been about males in leadership. Only in recent years has the spotlight focused on the unique stressors experienced by female leaders with only emerging studies about female school leaders. Much of the available research has been accelerated by the expressed needs of female school leaders during and after the recent pandemic. This is no surprise. Since 2019, female leadership stressors that may lead to a burnout diagnosis have far surpassed those of their male counterparts. While research studies cite that female leaders are seen as more effective before and after a crisis, literature is just recently being released about the unspoken spiraling burnout crisis that still occurs within many female leaders. This secretive self-diagnosis speaks to the internal personal struggle most female leaders feel as they try to validate their feelings, balance the stressors in their lives, and stay effective. Leadership should not make you ill. Every burnout experience is unique to that person and so is the manner in which they choose to address it. Female school leaders are no different.

In the dictionary, burnout is defined as exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration: a person suffering from burnout. Burnout as a term to signify the dictionary definition has been around for decades, but it was not until 2019 that the World Health Organization identified burnout - workplace stress left unmanaged - as an occupational phenomenon. Burnout pre-pandemic, and this is overwork alone, was responsible for the deaths of 2.8 million people a year. (Moss & Rahilly, 2021)

Burnout is also highly correlated with other physical and mental issues. It is important to understand the relationship between mental health and burnout. According to Frontiers in Psychology, burnout is due to chronic stress, fatigue, cynicism, and lack of accomplishment.

Stress levels can impact both your mental and physical health.

Indicators can include:

- Tense muscles
- Blood pressure increase
- Increase in heart rate
- Hyperventilating
- Off-balanced digestion

Burnout is not just one event; rather, it happens gradually over time until the person experiencing burnout may often not be able to remember a time when they did not feel that way. As individuals, we accommodate and pacify ourselves about how we are feeling and how we are doing until the stressors get too great and we describe ourselves as burnt out. Burnout can start with simple tasks and overloads on a daily basis at work and extend into projects and other duties that lack boundaries for individuals. This creates a perceived or real loss of control over self which, if repeated, becomes a toxic pattern that is unmanageable at best.

A RAND study found that "access to employer-provided mental health supports is linked to lower levels of job-related stress and higher levels of resilience for both principals and teachers. About 20 percent of principals and 35 percent of teachers reported that they did not have access

to any employer-provided mental health support or did not know whether they had such access," (Steiner & Doan, 2022).

The same RAND study also found that 80 percent of secondary school principals experienced frequent job-related stress during the 2020–2021 school year. Women principals — along with principals of color, principals of high-poverty schools and principals of schools with high numbers of students of color — were particularly likely to experience "constant job-related stress," researchers found.

Data from the 2020 McKinsey Report (McKinsey and Company, 2020) poll found that:

- 53 percent of women reported feeling job-related stress, compared to 46 percent of men
- 37 percent of women felt exhaustion, compared to 31 percent of men
- 32 percent of women felt burnout, compared to 28 percent of men

The disparity is even more obvious at the senior level. For example, 54 percent of senior-level female leaders felt exhausted compared to just 41 percent for men, and 39 percent experienced burnout with only 29 percent of male leaders reporting the same. The World Health Organization (WHO) has now updated its definition of burnout in the new version of its handbook of diseases, the *International Classification of Diseases — ICD-11 —* which went into effect in January 2022. Burnout is now a legitimate disease.

In May 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared burnout an occupational phenomenon resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed (Steelcase.com, n.d.). Doctors can now diagnose someone with burnout syndrome if they have the following three symptoms:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
- Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativity or cynicism related to one's job
- Reduced professional efficacy

It is very easy for individuals to determine the difference between the routine stressors of leadership, general tiredness leading to exhaustion, mental health issues and burnout. The latest NASSP survey reveals that the position of school leadership is in crisis. The 2020 NASSP survey found COVID-19 prompted 45 percent of the administrators to hasten their plans to leave the education profession. The pandemic also led a quarter of surveyed principals to consider leaving their positions for the first time. Burnout numbers have spiraled out of proportion and unmonitored, continue to escalate. For women, the numbers are even more dire.

The 2021 Women in the Workplace Report cited the additional burnout burden for most female leaders includes the fact that "one in three women, and 60% of mothers with young children ……spend five or more hours a day on housework and caregiving." The report continues to discuss the "shift work" of women leaders at the leadership level - shift one is the leadership position, shift two is the work women do at home, and shift three is the after-hours and time work completed to support shift one. These efforts are in addition to their school leadership position. It is no wonder that it is not just the workload at work that causes stressors, but the additional stressors that naturally come from being a caregiver, spouse, or both. This so-called "shift work" is not matched by their male counterparts with the same professional leadership position. Energy

is finite for female school leaders who continue to struggle to manage the twenty-four daily hours in the most productive ways (McKinsey and Company, 2021). The Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021 American Time Use Survey indicated that male and female household burdens prior to the pandemic showed that women carried more of the burden but has become even more disproportionate as a result of the pandemic. The survey showed that women dedicated more than twice as many hours as men to caring for household members (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). The McKinsey (2021) study also shows that stressors exist even for single female leaders.

The report states that "Senior level women are also nearly twice as likely as women overall to be "Onlys" - the only one or one of the only women in the room at work. These circumstances set the stage for microaggressions, criticisms, dismissals, and high-performance stakes, all of which contribute to female leaders experiencing burnout 1.5 times more than male leaders."

The 2022 Deloitte Women at Work Report cites that Women in ethnic-minority groups are also more likely to feel burned out than those who are not in a minority group. They are also less likely to feel comfortable talking about their mental health in the workplace or disclosing it as a reason for their absence (Deloitte, 2022).

What many do not understand, however, is how many leaders attempt to hide their inner feelings of burnout within what looks like engaged leadership. A recent study conducted by the Yale University Center for Emotional Intelligence, in collaboration with the Faas Foundation, casts doubts on the idea of high engagement as a purely beneficial experience. The study found that high engagement is most often accompanied by high stress. Continued high stress that is not managed can lead to burnout. The study found that 1 in 5 highly engaged employees were also experiencing traits of personal burnout (Moeller, Ivcevic, White, Menges, & Brackett, 2018). Female leaders are not left out of this number.

The common word is exhaustion. Alexis Krivkovich from the Role of Senior Women in the Workplace 2021 Report cites (McKinsey and Company, 2021):

> What we hear from most senior women is this sense of exhaustion and those feelings of burnout like they always have to be on; like the responsibilities have magnified in ways that are really profound. And the lack of boundaries and expectations of when you are in the office, when the office comes to you, has become particularly challenging for them.

Post pandemic leadership is an additional stressor for all school leaders. The uncertainty inherent in the role of daily school leadership carries with it an ambiguity that often prevents school leaders from being clear and concise with those that they lead. The lack of a clear vision or plan as well as the constantly shifting priorities in response to real life events causes additional anxiety and stress for all school leaders, including female school leaders. Few school districts have reframed their systems of support to address the new realities being experienced in the roles of school and district leadership.

Methodology

Even in well-known surveys such as the McKinsey Report, it is difficult to gather honest data on workplace burnout. The 2021 McKinsey Report stated that burnt out employees are less likely to respond to survey requests about their own burnout, and the most burnt out employees may have already left the workforce prior to any intervention on their own or from their workplace. Of those employees who did respond to the survey, nearly half are experiencing burnout symptoms at work (McKinsey, 2021).

The subjects of the study for this research were randomly selected anonymous educators contacted through social media and self-verified as being current or newly retired female administrators. The

survey design collected data within three top burnout dimensions. The female survey respondents self-reported themselves as approaching or already being in burnout. The respondents noted common less than positive feelings regardless of being an active administrator, newly retired, new to the position or having served in the position for multiple years.

These Phase 1 surveys were completed using Google Form Survey within a three-week window during August – September 2022 to get initial data for the subject. There were forty-four online responses.

To continue, participants may self-select to participate in the study for Phase 2 which will include them completing the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey. Phase 2 will be open to an increased pool of participants. The items on this survey will be divided into the three major dimensions of burnout as cited by Maslach's research which are emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced personal accomplishment (PA).

The Participants

My current status as a female campus or district leader is:
44 responses

- Current Campus Leader (assistant, instructional, principal, etc...)
- Current District Leader (various)
- Retired Campus Leader
- Retired District Leader
- Current College/University Leader
- Retired College/University Leader
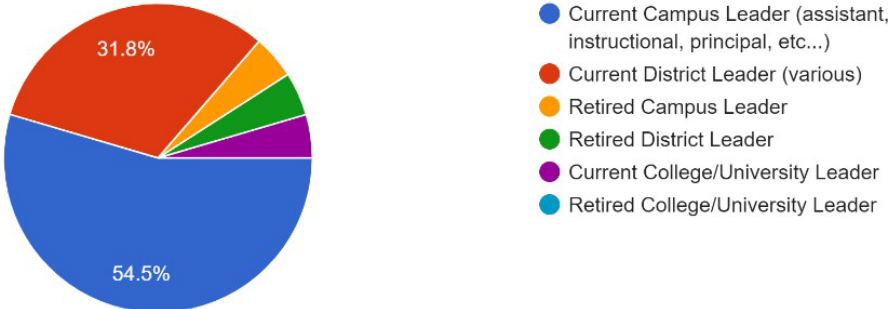
Have you changed positions in the last 24 months?
44 responses

- Yes
- No
- Retired
- Left HISD 4/2021
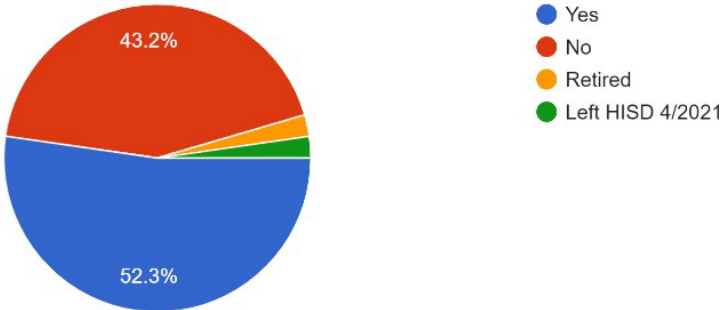
Phase 1 Survey Question Responses

As a female campus or district leader, do you feel that you have ever experienced burnout?
44 responses

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

13.6%
86.4%
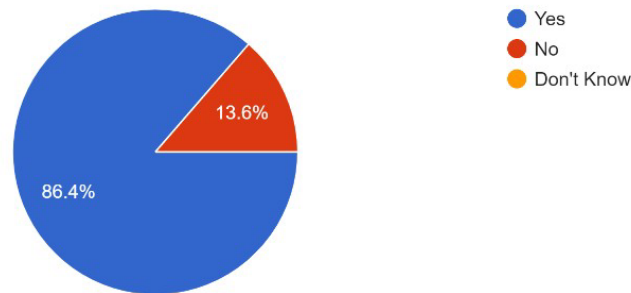
What do you think could have been a primary reason for your burnout experience?
44 responses

- Excessive workload
- Lack of career control or advancement
- Toxic workplace environment
- Something else

27.3%
25%
40.9%
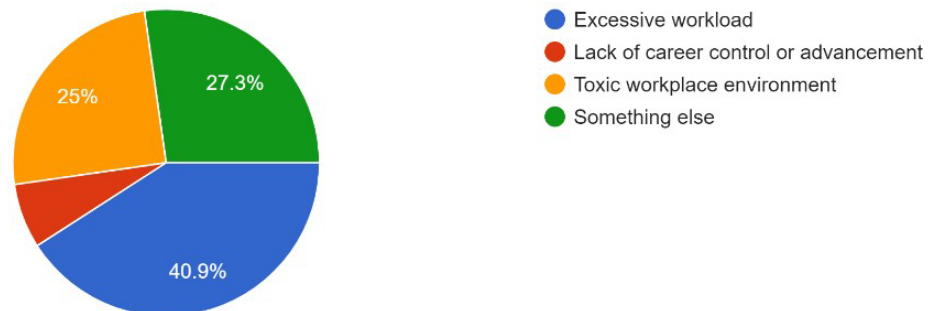
If you chose "something else" on the question above or if you would like to explain further, **could you please elaborate below?**

- Lack of support

- My workload was excessive and an assistant was needed.

- Lack of support from the district level in regards to special education, lack of being able to make decisions for my campus even though I am the one here running it each day.

- The challenges of having a campus that is struggling academically and teacher turnover.

- I feel micromanaged. The first time in 30 years.

- In my previous district, the political "wrangling" taking place was overwhelming. If you find yourself on the wrong side of the political leaders, you are an outcast, ignored, or not provided information or support. This is emotionally draining to maneuver. You spent

most of your time trying to figure out the game and finding out what you're not being told. This leads to burnout.

- I am in a decentralized district so the principal is responsible for everything from repair work orders to managing an intensive budget. Many systems at the district level could streamline submissions related to the principal position.

- Working through COVID (e.g., staff shortages, unfilled jobs, increase in mental health issues with staff and students, uncertainty about pandemic)

- 3 years of Covid then a 5-million-dollar renovation project WHILE school was still open…the entire year last year and still not completed this year. The "no sub" situation and lack of certified teachers has been difficult.

- Women working for men.

- Lack of acknowledgment for hard work while male counterparts are acknowledged.

- Disrespectful and hateful adults. I would include excessive workload - campus understaffed.

- I've worked in central office in school leadership at three districts. It's toxic anywhere you go. The blame game creates a toxic environment. No one wants to own the mistakes, but we should. I do.

- Defining toxicity here as (my perceived) effects of corrupt and nepotistic hiring/promoting employment practices and/or seeming lack of available performance-based opportunities to mid-managers focused exclusively on school achievement and personal development, as opposed to invoking workplace politics as a strategy for advancement.

- Toxic district board leadership environment

- Burnout is related to toxic environment

- Lack of support when I was a campus AP.

- The responses to this survey do not reflect my current situation.

- I have felt overwhelmed, maybe not completely burned out.

- Really all of the above. It is never just one thing that causes burnout, but normally a collection of things that over time cause frustrating feelings.

- Workload as loan administrator, extensive State requirements, and my own excessive personal loss during a short period of time.

- Trying to advance my career and getting rejected for most of my career takes a toll on the soul.

- Difficulty prioritizing demands of my career and personal life

If you had a burnout experience, did your place of employment offer organized support?
44 responses

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

75%
9.1%
15.9%
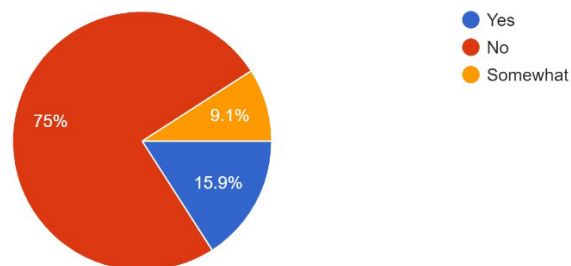
If you had a burnout experience, how did you personally cope on your own?

- Taking personal/sick leave…..rest

- Vacation

- I engaged in self-care activities daily

- Found my own mentors to bounce ideas off of or get advice from and tried to take care of myself mentally, physically, and emotionally outside of work.

- I balanced my workload with my personal obligations. I talked to other colleagues that experienced the same thing and came up with options that helped with the burnout.

- Stay focused on my reason for being in education.

- I stayed focused on my campus priorities. I talked to my peers to fill in the holes of information that I was missing. I prayed a lot and reminded myself that I am not the problem in this situation. I am in a new district and in a new role this year. Thank GOD.

- Weekend respite self-care

- I sought and gained employment elsewhere.

- Therapy, looking at other jobs/careers for hope

- Try to get enough sleep, go for walks, spend time with family and friends, ask superintendent for more support at school

- I just made sure I was taking care of myself and leaving work at school. I wouldn't bring home anything from school to work on.

- I started looking for another job.

- limit evening emails and work

- Family: friends support and exercise

- Making time to exercise and find PD for me so I have a network of support outside my district.

- Luckily, I have a very supportive husband and an AP that was going through it all with me. Just tried to take care of myself.

- Try to use vacation to totally disconnect. Put on out of office message and only responded if it was absolutely time sensitive.

- Still trying to deal with it.

- Set more boundaries

- Unplugging during my vacation. Being intentional about rejuvenating myself

- Therapy

- I am surrounded by a great team - but I am coping by calculating my retirement.

- Personal support through exercise. I'm on my own.

- Taking some vacation time.

- Daily talks with trusted friends in district or famous leadership

- Tried to ignore it and tried to push through it.

- Making sure I focus on the moment that I am in. If I am at home, I focus on what is going on at the house. At work, I focus on work. I had to learn how to balance my work life with my personal life.

- Sought other activities when not working to decompress like exercise

- Changed jobs and moved districts.

- Long hours at work, working in the evening and on the weekends

- Meditation, took a break, and spent time with family.

- I was able to talk about it with my director. I wouldn't consider myself a campus leader.

- My family and faith help me through difficulties and burnout. I don't rely on my work organization (especially schools) to provide support since they are normally over tasked with trying to provide support to students. I place it on myself to take personal self-care days when needed, and talk with trusted individuals who can help me problem solve any issues that I encounter.

- Organized help, No. However, several within the District Admin did provide kindness.

  My doctor prescribed depression/anxiety meds to help me cope. It was like I put on a mask to get through the mountains of work and activities; then would collapse when I got home. My coworkers did not know and my family did not understand.

- I had to create my own connections with my why and revisit my purpose daily.

- I went to therapy, or I would find another outlet, for example, playing video games and creating art in my spare time.

- I have an incredible, patient husband who forgives me for not being present.

What advice would you give to other female educational leaders who may experience burnout?

- Don't ignore the burnout symptoms-Take personal time, seek counseling, talk to other women in leadership positions

- Take time off

- Take time for yourself and understand the importance of self-care.

- Find a group of other principals, educators, and people outside who could keep your grounded and on track. People who you can bounce ideas off of and trust to give you honest opinions and feedback but who are also there to support you professionally and personally.

- Remember why you are in the leadership position and never let it gets so overwhelming that you stress out. Schedule time for yourself and focus on God, prayer, family, and friends. Be grateful and positive! Talk with others to find solutions to the challenges in life. Your health is important.

- Do your job, stay focused on the "why", and create a life-balance.

- Don't isolate yourself. Keep talking to your trusted friends and peers. You may need to make a change for the situation to improve. And, that is alright. Take care of yourself first. Your campus is only as good as you are.

- Make sure all campus personnel adhere to the systems and routines of the campus.

- Know your worth, set boundaries, and no job is worth it if it compromises any dimensions of your wellbeing (physical, financial, mental, relationships, etc)

- Do not put your work first. If you give 100% of yourself to work, you have nothing else to give to life, family, friends, or yourself.

- You can't do it all. Ask for help. Take it one day at a time.

- It's about who your work for. Get into a better work environment.

- Find a place where you are encouraged to thrive

- Allow your weekend to be for personal and family only, train parents and staff to not respond to emails after 5pm. It's ok to allow 18-24 hrs.

- Reach out to others

- Find people you can trust who understand your role. Get together once or twice a month in person or virtually for coffee or a cocktail.

- It's truly all about balance…the job, prioritizing, hire good people you. An trust and delegate things to, and making sure you take care of yourself. Honestly, no one else is going to take care of you like you need them to so please get rest, eat healthy, exercise, find your "tribe" of current or retired educators with whom you can lean on.

- Seek help and guidance.

- Fight the good fight but don't settle for less than what you are worth

- Take time off, set boundaries on the work

- Take your lunch break and use your vacation time.

- Set personal limits - I'm old school and give it all and more to doing the job at an excessively high level. It isn't healthy and it doesn't grow your career potential or bring peace of mind.

- Do other things besides just the work you do for your job. I work on do-it-yourself projects and artsy things to make my mind work completely different than what I do every day.

- Never forget to take care of yourself. Your district will post your position before you're even properly buried. Your health is #1. Be reflective and truly prioritize things that matter most in your life. Take Vacations! If you're not happy, find a position that will make you happy.

- Quit before you get there; establish and maintain boundaries to protect your health and personal life; don't trust district leaders or support groups to do what's best when reporting abuse/toxicity in the workplace.

- Don't give up. Think about the children and the district's well-being.

- Setting boundaries and time management.

- Keep trying, you are noticed

- To find a happy medium and put the job down at the end of the day. Don't take work home. Find a job with a supportive team.

- Document your time on task and all the various jobs you are involved in. Collect the data and that shows how much time you are spending in each area. Get your thoughts on paper regarding the conversation you would like to have with your supervisor about why you need assistance with accomplishing your delegated responsibilities.

- This is a serious issue and burnout can eliminate our most talented leaders, so knowing the signs of burnout and planning to address it and then addressing it is difficult and most people need an accountability partner to accomplish balance.

- This too shall pass.

- Seek help from family, church and take care of yourself by finding something that you enjoy outside of work. Join support groups like gyms to workout stress or book clubs- whatever you enjoy- squeeze it into your schedule! Also, don't take on other people's issues. Being able to balance work/life is crucial for our mental stability.

- Ask for support. I did not because I felt it would make me look weak. You might not get what you need therefore be ready to make changes necessary to help your own health.

- n/a

- voice concerns, offer solutions, reconnect with your why, find purpose in the work, find the organization that you can align your core values with

- Try therapy and find a hobby you love.

- Delegate, ask for help, surround yourself with reliable people

Findings

In early stages of burnout symptoms, female leaders made some of the usual choices such as an afternoon or day off, or medical appointment excuse. Some took advantage of publicly found self-care routines such as massages, beauty appointments, and the like. Eventually, some even took accrued vacation days as a last resort. Most female administrators surveyed did not tell anyone about how they were feeling regardless of whether they were a campus or systems level leader. Of the surveyed administrators, few had or even knew of a way that their school district could provide support for them.

The findings of this study mirrored many of the findings of the national burnout data. The top reason given by female campus and district leaders for their personal burnout was cited as excessive workload. Several cited the unexpected obstacles of working through COVID (e.g., staff shortages, unfilled jobs, increase in mental health issues with staff and students, uncertainty about pandemic), but admitted that some of these obstacles existed even before the pandemic.

The findings from this study also showed that the topic is one of great concern for female school and district learners. Unfortunately, the study also revealed that there are few if any effective preventative systems of support for female school and district leaders. The survey responses echoed the solution as coming not from organizational supports, but from individual triage to stay afloat. There is an immediate need for more research and the creation of supports for all leaders, but particularly for female school and district leaders in this area.

Findings and recommendations related to stress and burnout from the State of the American Teacher and the State of the American Principal 2021 (RAND Corporation, 2022, p. 1) state that:

- District leaders should alleviate educators' sources of job-related stress, for example, by expanding tutoring.

- programs, investing in summer school, or hiring additional staff to address student behavior and mental health concerns and provide more adult support in the classroom.

- Districts that offer mental health and well-being support should (1) ensure that teachers and principals know about them and (2) address barriers to access that are relevant in their districts, such as long wait times for counseling sessions. Districts that do not offer mental health or well-being support should consider doing so. District leaders should also avoid the appearance of treating wellness as a superficial or short-term problem.

- Many district and school leaders already work hard to build supportive environments and should build on their success. Leaders who have not made adult relationships a priority could consider transferring the strategies they use to build positive student-staff relationships to focus on adults. Leaders might also consider actions that could foster camaraderie among staff—such as intentional opportunities for social interactions—to build positive relationships among different groups of staff. They could also consider actions to support positive relationships among staff and family members of students—such as parent volunteering—that might have been suspended during the pandemic.

Conclusions

No school leader can predict their daily workload in these volatile, uncertain, chaotic, and

ambiguous times. All school leaders experience this struggle at some level. Most school leaders attempt to tough it out as part of their job description. It is time to have an honest conversation - to speak out loud about stress and burnout prevention. School leaders and their employers should monitor individual progress to address any early warning signs of burnout that may arise. While

the number of women attaining leadership positions continues to rise, the dark side of the excessive workloads, poor work-life balance, and institutionalized sexism that is inherent in the school workplace have not received little solution-oriented exposure to truly help female school leaders remain resilient. It is time to move past the whispers and the rejections to honestly meet the individualized needs of women in school leadership.

School leaders are having to lead in many different ways on multiple platforms with a level of urgency that is unprecedented in our educational world. These realities make school leadership stressful at best and unmanageable at worst. School leaders and female school leaders in particular must find new ways to lead that build resilience and sustainability. Female school leaders must redefine how they prepare for school leadership and how they are able to build capacity over time with behaviors that can resist the symptoms of burnout. Considering that most school systems do not already provide targeted preventative plans for school leaders who may be experiencing burnout, it is therefore a personal prerogative to be proactive about one's own care. From the surveyed school leaders, the following advice has been instrumental in helping those female school leaders design their own opportunities to avoid burnout.

A portion of the welfare of female school leaders is infused in how they personally view themselves, their work, and even how they are perceived by their peers or evaluators. It is imperative that female school leaders receive actionable feedback from their evaluators so that they can be alerted to the personal work behaviors that may drive them closer to burnout than behaviors that could strengthen their leadership. The facade of the perfect female leader creates far more stress than it diminishes. Female leaders often feel that they must know everything or that they cannot make any mistakes along the way - all leading to prolonged stress and eventually burnout. This feeling of having to be perfect has even become the deciding factor of some female leaders leaving the profession. The strain of making decision after decision and sometimes not getting it right can take its toll on any school leader. For female school leaders, the price of continued poor decision-making can cost leaders their career aspirations and have a devastating personal effect.

Preventing burnout for female school leaders is not a new issue, but most female school leaders either have felt that they needed to deal with it or just leave their position. The current percentages and severity of female school leader burnout now make it a pressing mental health issue that school systems can no longer ignore. The McKinsey Reports state that employers can and should view high rates of burnout as a powerful warning sign that the organization - not the individuals in the workforce - need to go under meaningful systematic change. Taking a systemic approach means addressing both the toxic workplace behavior and redesigning work to be inclusive, sustainable, and supportive of individual learning and growth, including leader and employee adaptability skills. It means rethinking organizational systems, processes, and incentives to redesign work, job expectations, and team environments. What are the frameworks within schools and school systems that normalize dealing with stress and prevent burnout? The ability to plan for and actively participate in proactive self-care routines and other solutions to prolonged stress is now a paramount need in every district. Districts must find new ways to proactively address the needs of all school leaders, including female school leaders. Networking, mentoring, and one to

one communication can help curb the effect of burnout, but a well- organized web of support will be most effective in meeting the varied needs of female leaders.

The differences in mindset that have occurred for all school leaders as a result of the pandemic may forecast the individual's personal ability to manage leadership in multiple environments - in person and remote. Burnout is an organizational issue that does not just affect the individual, it affects the team and the district as a whole. To prevent the spread of burnout, school systems need to address the root of the problem which often can be found in the way the system operates or in the perceived unrealistic expectations. A future study may address these realities and include ways to further reduce the gender bias in the preparation of school leaders as well as how to accurately provide actionable feedback that respects the unique background of female leaders. Additional research may look at the effect of mentorship and how successful female leaders can help multiply their leadership through mentoring others. Female school leaders can emerge from these challenging times and thrive at the campus and systems level by being open to trying new ways to minimize stress and avoid burnout. The best person to help recognize and recover from burnout sometimes is the individual themselves. Taking ownership and normalizing any female school leader's feelings of stress and burnout can actually be that important first step to recovery.

Future Study

Perceived inevitable burnout among female administrators can have a negative effect on the future of females seeking systems leadership roles. Future studies could encourage school district and school leadership support organizations to design new approaches and systemic ways to support all school leaders, but particularly female school leaders in order to normalize using preventative stress and burnout strategies within the job role. These supports could look like daycare, elder care, flexible hours, teaming leadership roles, and increased flexibility. Future studies could also include the relationship between burnout, anxiety, and depression.

Additionally, schools and districts could be more proactive about developing mentoring pathways for prospective female school and district leaders, particularly female leaders of color, in more meaningful ways.

Effective future studies should examine the workplace and unique stressors such as microaggressions, diversity, equity, and inclusion to determine their impact on the female school leader experience. These future studies must create realistic, sustainable, and affordable pathways to help female school leaders achieve success and longevity in their roles.

It is time. It is time to ensure that every school leader has the freedom to separate their personal and professional lives in order to be the best leader that they can be. It is time to work from a place of energy instead of exhaustion. It is time to admit when you are ok and even more important to admit when you are not. It is time to stop "faking it till you make it". It is time to have the courage to begin again without fear of being judged. It is time to make space - your space to thrive and do more than just survive. The world of school leadership needs you - the best you. We need the "you" of your dreams. We need the "you" that began the educational journey to positively impact every student in your charge. This will take hard work from you.

Every day. All day.

In the words of Principal Kafele, it all begins with the importance of "Why" (Kafele, 2018, para 5):

> You decided at that moment that you wanted to be a school leader. When you made that

decision, you didn't put a period at the end of that sentence. You didn't say. "I want to be a principal - period. Instead, you inserted a comma and added a reason why. There was a specific reason you wanted to transition into school leadership, to go on to grad school and earn your credentials. Whatever the reason was, it was your purpose for wanting to lead - your "why". But now that you are a school leader, much of what you encounter day to day are responsibilities you didn't anticipate when you made the decision to lead.

Because you may not have anticipated these realities, you've had to adapt to them, and in

adapting to them, you've probably become consumed by them and overwhelmed. It's likely you have lost your initial "why".

Female Leaders! Reclaim your why. Reclaim your life. Do it for yourself. Do it for all of us.

Make yourself a priority. Promise to begin today.

You deserve to be your best YOU every single day.

WE.

ALL.

DO.

And.

We,

Need.

You.

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The women leaders who provided this study passionately lead with action toward building the culture they write about. It's the leader's vision and drive to build and write the story of culture daily. The authors share their journey as transformational leaders, creating, driving, and carrying the culture.

Positive Culture Demands Action: A Latina Leadership Perspective on School Culture

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Abstract

This article will help bring awareness to varying definitions in which culture is perceived and its important characteristics thereof. Additionally, readers will learn about individuals' perceptions of who influences the organization's culture. An anonymous survey approach was used to collect information from employees in the San Elizario Independent School District. The findings revealed strong connections to beliefs, values, and team in defining culture. The survey also revealed varying culture characteristics correlating with an even stronger belief that the people with the most power and influence in an organization's culture are both contributors and team players who are an important part of the team. Culture is a consistent action that must be invested in.

Introduction

Having a positive organizational culture should remain at the forefront of any organization. Understanding the characteristics and actions needed to ensure a positive school culture is vital to driving the change and growth of the organization. As leaders, we not only carry our culture and beliefs, but we must also embrace and acclimate the culture and beliefs of the team to create a collective force that drives the organization forward. In a school setting, cultural influence comes from outside factors we must navigate. These factors include policy and governance.

Given the recent events that impacted the world, as leaders of the San Elizario Independent School District, we found ourselves vulnerable. We faced complex decisions that affected all faculty and staff. We quickly realized that our culture was evolving whether we were ready or not. As a leadership team, we renewed our commitment to strive to provide a positive culture for all employees.

Culture

The definition of culture is vast. The first definition of the Merriam Webster online defines culture as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group" (Merriam Webster, n.d.). Such a definition strengthens the belief that culture is what we carry with us and develops over time. Every individual has a culture nurtured over time and shaped through consistent experiences heavily influenced by cultural customs. It is the customary beliefs that individuals inherently create based on shared experiences born of social constructs that include race, religion, and societal groups. For this work, it is also valuable to bring forward the second definition of culture that Merriam Webster online states as "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization." The two definitions give a balanced approach to define further and identify what culture is and its power to impact any environment positively or negatively. An organization's culture is immediately observable and felt the minute one walks in the door. A positive or negative culture can also be felt via a phone call. The caller can immediately tell if the person on the other line is smiling while answering the phone. The same is true of email communication. Culture transcends beyond in-person interactions.

Culture (from the Latin cultura stemming from colere, meaning "to cultivate") refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. Cultures can be "understood as systems of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, that lack fixed boundaries, that are constantly in flux, and that interact and compete with one another." ("What is culture?" n.d.). Culture is another form of language, and there is no such thing as a universal cultural language. Instead, a language of culture within the organization is composed of many individuals' experiences. Similar to our DNA, cultural genetics are unique for every individual. Cultural genetics are influenced by prior generations. Then, those cultural genetics are transferred and refined throughout our lifespan. We can conclude that even as siblings living in the same house and raised by the same set of parents, as human beings, we do not grow up having the same feelings, beliefs, or reactions as our siblings. In a Healthline article titled "DNA Explained and Explored," Dr. Seladi-Schulman, stated the following: "Why is DNA so important? Put simply, DNA contains the instructions necessary for life. The code within our DNA provides directions on how to make proteins that are vital for our growth, development, and overall health" (Seladi-Schulman, 2022). If you replace the word "DNA" with "Culture," the same applies if we think of proteins as a set of behaviors vital for our growth development within our organization.

As one tries to internalize the meaning of the word culture and what it means to an individual. One quickly realizes that it is associated with a collection of feelings and behaviors. Our culture impacts how an individual interacts with others; most importantly, it is part of an individual's essence. It defines who we are and how we make people feel. "Culture is a word for the way of life of groups of people, the behavior, beliefs, values, and symbols they accept, without thinking about them, passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next generation" (BeauteHealthy, 2020). Culture is present in our religion, language, customs, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, etc. Culture directly impacts every decision we make. In addition, there is complexity in the meaning of the word culture. Its usage can be in the context of a verb or a noun. In an organizational culture setting, the preferred use of the word is that of a verb because it demands action. The powerful thing about culture is that it always exists, even when we do "nothing." Culture does not stop happening during budget meetings and audit processes. It is even happening as you read this article. "It is not a separate thing. Most culture-changing initiatives fail because they are treated like just another project—something that is short-term, has a measurable outcome, and has a definite beginning, middle, and end" ("Why culture is a verb, not a noun," 2018).

Culture Characteristics

Every individual that becomes part of an organization carries a culture. Culture evolves when individuals officially acknowledge they are part of a new team, group, or organization member. Culture change creates a constant dynamic of cultures being introduced, molded, and evolving as humans continuously interact. According to Johnson and Gailey (2021), "Culture must be systemically "hardwired" into the fabric of the organization's HR systems, quality, and operational excellence initiatives, and employee and customer experience to be sustainable" (Johnston & Gailey, 2021, p. 38). In this context, the power of the culture in any organization drives through sustainable and consistent practices supported by an organization's hiring team. An organization hires individuals with established systems of beliefs. Therefore, an organization employs its culture with every individual it brings into the organization. In a larger context, the organization values and best keeps the numerous variables introduced into the existing culture

that has the best chance of nurturing, sustaining, and creating the positive culture sought out by individuals in any given organization.

In *The Power of Positive Leadership*, Gordon (2017) states that "culture is not just one thing but everything. Culture drives expectations and beliefs. Expectations and beliefs drive behaviors. Behaviors drive habits. And habits create the future. It starts with the culture you create and drive throughout the organization." (Gordon, 2017, p. 16). The consistent process in which culture evolves is a result of decisions and attitudes demonstrated by individuals within the organization. However, the task of a positive culture is habitually the responsibility of the individual in charge of the organization. Even for the savviest individual, this is a big undertaking. How can the entirety of an organization's existence be solely dependent on any one individual? Thus, solid developed expectations and beliefs translate into the behaviors of many individuals in an organization that commit to practicing. This then begins to shape a belief system by which the organization is one. Individuals decide and pledge to become and remain a part of the organization's future. Ongoing and established sets of behaviors and essential habits that inevitably shape the culture for transformation.

Another crucial ingredient that makes up an organizational culture is leadership. Dr. Quintin Shepard, the author of The Secret to Transformational Leadership, writes about the need for a new language of leadership. The new terminology is different from that of a competent leader. Based on the notion of competence, this old leadership paradigm gets hung up before it even starts. "If I am stuck in a paradigm of competence, I am also on a continuum of bad and good leadership" (Shepherd & Williamson, 2022, p.21). The new language of leadership embraces humanity, authenticity, and transformation. These descriptors align with those of a cultural system. As contributors to a culture, we must embrace the humanity and authenticity of other team players to allow the unified belief system to transform the organization. Just like leadership, organizational culture is human, authentic, and transformational.

Competent leadership locks a leader into a paradigm of good and bad, while compassionate leadership "allows us to open the door to the critic to be part of the effort" (Shepherd & Williamson, 2022, p.23). This new form of leadership recognizes that one person cannot make an organization's culture just because they are in a position of power. Instead, by being part of the effort, the leader leads from the middle, which allows the leader to "bring everyone in just a little closer to make their voices heard. Step into the conversation, not above it" (Shepherd & Williamson, 2022, p.23). A positive culture will always embrace an open line of communication. A positive culture does not exist without a positive relationship between the leader and the follower. There is a negative connotation at times to being a "follower." However, in terms of an organization, positive work culture cannot exist without an active fellowship. As Dr. Shepard suggests, leaders and followers develop mutual purposes, not goals.

A positive culture is easily observable. In the context of a school organization, positive school culture is evident within the first two to three minutes upon an individual entering the lobby of a school. What would that behavior entail if the expectation was greeting every individual? Let us consider what this would look like and sound like. The greeting would involve assessing the connotation or intonation of the greeting. Eye contact is also a valuable interaction. In addition, the ability to understand the needs of the individual greeted. Done consistently, can the same individual return to the same school and be greeted by the same person with the same cheerful disposition? Even more, can the same individual be greeted in the same positive manner by

another member of the school team and have the same positive experience? Individuals live a joyous, continual shared experience and begin to correlate a shared experience where the positive culture is known to exist. Therefore, based on individual and eventually collective experienced interpretations and characteristics by numerous individuals, it can help validate the understanding that a positive culture does indeed exist.

Interestingly, culture is not a topic that administrators thoroughly research as part of their administrative coursework. This is such an important aspect, but it is a minimal emphasis of the coursework for individuals seeking an administrative certification. During the administrative coursework, the focus on the importance of culture is absent. Rarely is culture the focus of a newly appointed administrator. An administrator's awareness of a failing, or a thriving culture is evident upon entering their first administrative assignment. It is also a critical skill that individuals must develop to have a chance at having a positive learning environment for students. The daily lived culture either positively or negatively transforms campuses. Changing culture requires considerable skill. Yet, training rarely exists on the importance of how strong culture is to an organization's success or how to change cultures. "Training in culture change should be a high priority in organizations" (Keaster & Houchens, 2015, p. 354).

Individuals understand what a positive culture system looks like. A system of methods and characteristics will generate and establish enjoyable behaviors in the collective group of students. In this sense, a teacher is equally crucial in establishing the learning environment that constructs a positive culture for students in the school system. It is a repeated cycle throughout the school that every individual must uphold in the system. Sinek (2014) states, "If certain conditions, are met and the people inside an organization feel safe among each other, they will work together to achieve things none of them could have ever achieved alone" (Sinek, 2014, p.17). Considering all the individuals in a school that students encounter, each is dependent on every adult, regardless of their role in the organization, who will work to create that positive culture that will continue to replicate in every student's life experiences. The same applies to a negative culture. A negative culture is also born from the same behaviors described where individuals' needs are not validated or addressed. This construct develops over time, and individuals begin identifying specificity in what contributes to a less than stellar culture. Suppose you take an extension of the culture in the classroom and how this would impact students. Think for a moment about the impact. What actions are needed to positively alter the negative culture, so it becomes an optimal culture for an individual?

Before action can occur, an individual must intend to create change within a given context. The individual intentions of its members directly impact organizational culture collectively; these intentions become the organization's goals and vision. "The intention is an abstract characterization of what the action will be and, most importantly, the action's goal" ("Culture and action, or why action theory is not optional," 2021). As an active participant in an organization and its culture, there are times individuals are faced with complex decisions. How often have we heard the phrase "your silence says a lot." I believe we can all agree that silence is an interpretation of a non-actionable act. However, in the context of organizational culture, culture produces action. For example, remaining silent in perceived unfair situations does not improve the organization's culture. Avoiding a crucial conversation with a coworker could result in a lost opportunity to improve a relationship. These non-actions threaten the culture of the organization.

Like our physical health, the cultural health of an organization is affected by what is invested into it - good or bad protein. An organization's culture defines the proper way to behave within the organization. "This culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, shaping employee perceptions, behaviors, and understanding" ("Understanding and developing organizational culture," 2021). Therefore, it is essential to recognize that our culture impacts the organization's overall culture because it becomes part of the shared beliefs and values of the collective culture.

In his book, Culturize, Jimmy Casas provides the four core principles that he believes distinguish a positive school culture:

- We must expect all staff to **champion for all students**
- Every staff member must **expect excellence** of one another
- All Staff members must **carry the banner** for their school in a positive light at all times
- Every educator, administrator, and support staff member must strive to be a **merchant of hope**

A champion is a change agent. To be a champion for all students means to inspire and energize others to reach their potential. We must encourage all educators to believe that their interactions with students' matter. Expecting excellence from one another is essential in building a culture of accountability. Maintaining a certain level of excellence within the organization speaks to continuous improvement. Continuous improvement means our work continues. Carrying the banner of our organization in a positive light is crucial. The only way to inspire others to be proud of the organization is to lead by example. If we are proud of our values and identity as an organization, we must reflect that in every conversation. If we do not tell our story, someone else will. We initiate the direction of the desired narrative. Lifting each other in the process is necessary for the organization's health. Members of the team must understand that it is never about the individual self; it is about what we can do as an organization to improve the lives of the students we serve.

The responsibility we hold as educators is immense. We change lives! Hope fuels our desire to continue to do so. If we lose hope that we can change for the better, our goals die before birth. The intention behind setting a goal is to attain it. We must individually and collectively believe it is possible to achieve a particular goal. Regardless of title, all members of the organization must strive to be merchants of hope. We must take every opportunity to inspire students to see beyond their current circumstances. If we believe that we can change lives, then it is possible. However, it requires action and encouraging each other to see life through the lens of hope. When we put on the glasses of hope, we see the opportunity before us which makes it possible to see beyond the struggle. Replicated, this is the culture in motion that is present to engage in by choice. We carry a clear banner of the culture we want. Notice how each culture's building blocks demand a type of action: to champion, to expect, to carry, and strive to be a merchant of hope. As mentioned earlier, our culture is like our DNA in many cases. However, the good news about our cultural DNA is that we can control the change that must occur to impact our organizational culture positively.

Culture and Policy

School District Governance is our reality. As school district leaders, we abide by the Texas Education Code, School Board Policies, Administrative Regulations, etc. Have you ever stopped

to think about how policies affect the culture of our organizations? Let us think about the pandemic for a second. What new administrative regulations did you have to implement because of employees teleworking? In many circumstances, the dire situations created the board resolutions to extend local leave to employees during the pandemic, to address continued compensation for idle employees, premium pay, emergency purchases, etc. Approved board resolutions became a reality in the San Elizario Independent School District. Instructional continuity was a priority. However, taking care of the human resources and ensuring the school district remained operational were equally important. These actions taken by the Board of Trustees characterize the language of a compassionate culture. A culture that allows leaders to lead from the middle brings everyone a little closer as they listen to the organization's collective needs. "The language we use is the climate we create now, and that will become our culture and policies five and ten years from now. Changing your language today is critical for our future" (Shepherd & Williamson, 2022, p.49). To lead from the middle suggests that critics become part of a solution and step into the conversation instead of addressing it top to bottom. Everyone then becomes an equal contributor to the systemic culture.

At the time, we did not stop to think about the cultural impact of all these decisions. Like many of you, we just knew we had to find a way to accomplish what we needed while complying with all policies and procedures. The discovery led to the realization of an evolving leadership language and actions. The district began transforming because we were being allowed by governing bodies to be flexible. Flexibility, an added action to the repertoire of cultural development, provided the freedom to engage with employees at varying levels depending on the situation. The Texas Education Agency was implementing waivers for school districts in teacher certifications, finance, attendance, accountability, etc. We were experiencing "change." As a State, we experienced the need for a new language of leadership. In many ways, governing bodies shifted from compliance to commitment. Then, the commitment to continue the collective goal of providing instruction to students despite the challenges. Once again, our culture demanded action, intentional action.

As local education agencies, each school district has its own organizational culture. Before the pandemic, it was not typical for all the superintendents in the state to be on the same call with the education commissioner. The individual cultural climate directly impacted the conversations and decisions that followed. Each superintendent took the evolving conversations from leaders across the state and found ways to culturize their respective districts. Once again, the culture within a collective group was occurring. The pockets of the culture of the individual districts became part of a larger culture within a new group. Yet, another example of compassionate leadership.

Why is this important to our organizational culture? First, because employees felt "understood," we were in it together! We had a mutual purpose. Employees felt cared for. According to an article published by the Miami Herald, a Gallup Survey noted that employers who managed to make workers feel cared for did so by improving their workplace cultures, even amid the chaos of the pandemic. "Employee expectations of work may have fundamentally changed after the experiences of 2020 and 2021" (Gallup, 2022).

Organizational Culture Survey

The San Elizario Independent School District, located in San Elizario, TX, is one of twelve districts in region 19 in El Paso and Hudspeth County. As per the most recent Texas Academic Performance Report, the Texas Education Agency (2021) reported the district's enrollment at

3,189 students. The San Elizario Independent School District's ethnic distribution is 99.5% Hispanic, 0.04% White, and 0.01% African American. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students is 90.9%. The San Elizario Independent School District is home to approximately 548 employees. Of those employees, teachers account for 40% of the total staff, about 217 teachers. Like the student population, 94% of teachers are of Hispanic origin (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

Methodology

The survey utilized a quantitative approach. From July 1, 2022 – July 22, 2022, all employees in the San Elizario Independent School District were encouraged to respond to an Organizational Culture Survey. The answers were anonymous. The survey was conducted anonymously via SurveyMonkey and took approximately five minutes for the average respondent to complete. The study's objective was to determine how employees in the San Elizario Independent School District define organizational culture, identify the top three characteristics of a positive culture, and determine who employees consider the most influential individuals within the organizational culture. We asked 577 employees three questions regarding organizational culture. The district received 151 responses which is about a 26% participation rate.

<div align="center">

Data Collection

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The questions were as follows:

1. In your own words, please describe what "culture" in an organization means to you (open ended question).

2. What are your top three characteristics of a positive work culture? List them in order of importance (open ended question).

3. Participants identify who holds the most power and influence in the organization's culture.

   The four choices were as follows:

   - Individuals who are both contributors and team players, who are an essential part of the team. People like working with them.

   - Individuals who are charismatic, can inspire others, and are good at motivating others to develop their potential.

   - Individuals who are experts or specialists, who have the most knowledge about something important.

   - Individuals who have the title or position that gives them the right and authority to exercise power and influence.

<div align="center">

Findings

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For open-ended question one, "In your own words, please describe what "culture" in an organization means to you"; some of the most frequently used words were beliefs, values, and team. The term "beliefs" appeared in 20% of the responses while the word "values" appeared in 17% of the responses followed by "team" occurring in 10% of the answers.

As per the survey results, respondents used the word beliefs as a descriptor in 20% of the responses.

Sample responses (verbatim as communicated by survey respondents):

- Response # 58

  Culture is a way of life in which people share the same beliefs, customs, arts, knowledge, laws, habits, etc…which can create a positive or negative environment.

- Response # 61

  Culture is a shared belief to establish a positive working environment for the betterment of an organization where people enjoy their work.

- Response # 103
- The overall feeling and beliefs of the district.

As per the survey results, respondents used the word values as a descriptor in 17% of the responses.

Sample responses (verbatim as communicated by survey respondents):

- Response # 26

  School culture encompasses all the attitudes, behaviors and values that impact how the school operates. This might include how all stakeholders are thought of, considered, treated, and valued. It would also include traditions and rituals in the organization.

- Response #31

  Culture in an organization is made up of values and expectations that create a team/bond within a work environment.

- Response #37

  Culture in an organization is a set of values and directives that support the goals and structure of the organization. It shapes social and professional behaviors within the organization.

  As per the survey results, respondents used the word team as a descriptor in 10% of the responses.

  Response # 120

- Culture is the "feel" of an organization. It is evident when people want to be there because they know they are cared about and that they matter. They feel part of a (family) team, which includes everyone in the organization. Students thrive in this culture.

- Response # 117

  Culture in an organization meets creating an atmosphere where everyone's journey is respected and appreciated. Culture is showing up and being present. Culture is engaging with heart, soul, and mind. We are a team so together we rise. Our district is not "I", it's "We".

- Response # 92

  Team, all working for the same purpose

The following are responses with varying definitions of what culture in an organization meant to respondents.

Sample responses (verbatim as communicated by survey respondents):

- Response #51

  Culture for me is the environment, attitude, and flexibility within a workplace.

- Response #77

  It is what you see & sense the minute you walk in the door. The feeling you get the minute you open the door, the way the the campus looks, how people behave as they walk down the hall, how they interact with each other or with a complete stranger. The culture is having everyone or mostly everyone believe in the same goal, everyone having the same purpose.

- Response # 100

  Culture is the overall work atmosphere and environment. From the parking lot to the front office to the individual classrooms to the bathrooms, all of this contributes to the overall culture. The personalities and qualities and actions of the people within the organization are also major contributors to the culture as well.

Together, these responses point to a continued need for a shared vision within the organization where the team's beliefs and values influence the overall culture. Surprisingly, the word leader was used only three times by respondents. Therefore, concluding that employees in the San Elizario Independent School District do not believe that a positive organizational culture rests solely on the district's leadership. Instead, employees of the district believe that culture is a collective action.

For open-ended question two, "What are your top three characteristics of a positive work culture? Respondents were asked to list characteristics in order of importance. As shown in Figure 1 below, 45% of respondents felt that a positive culture is characterized by respect with 33% indicating communication, and 22% indicating teamwork as the collective top characteristics.

Figure 1

First Characteristic

Respect 45%
Communication 33%
Teamwork 22%

Figure 2
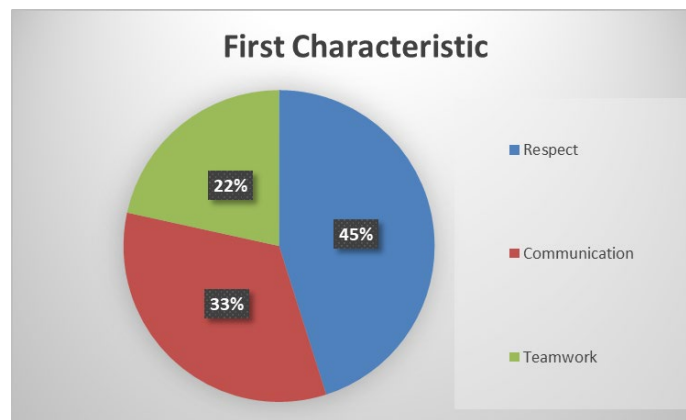
Second Characteristic
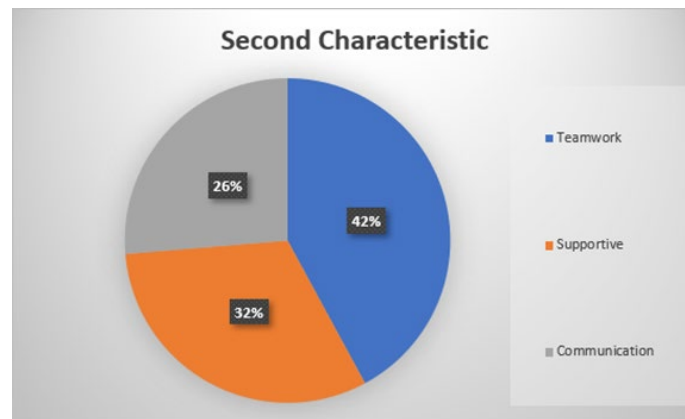
As shown in Figure 2 above, 42% of respondents felt that the second most important characteristic for a positive culture is teamwork with 32% indicating supportive, and 26% indicating communication.

Figure 3

Third Characteristic
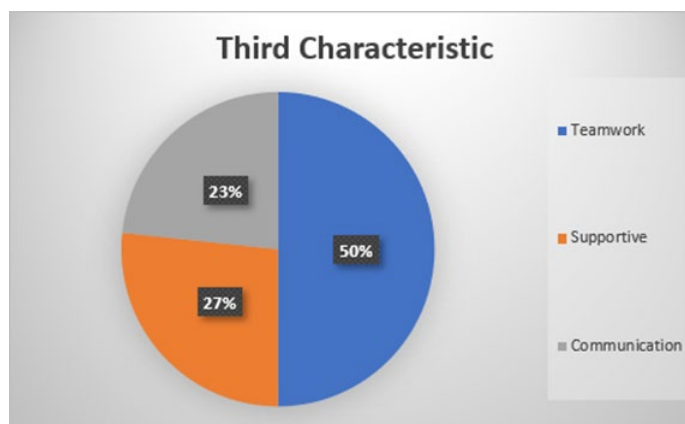
As shown in Figure 3 above, 50% of respondents felt that the third most important characteristic of a positive culture is teamwork with 27% indicating supportive, and 23% indicating communication.

For question three, respondents were asked to identify who within the organization holds the most power and influence in the organization's culture. In figure 4, out of 151 respondents, 108 (71.5%) feel that individuals who are both contributors and team players, who are an essential part of the team, and people like working with them, are the people with the most power and influence in the organization's culture.

Figure 4

Q3 The people with the most power and influence in the organization's culture

Answered: 151   Skipped: 0
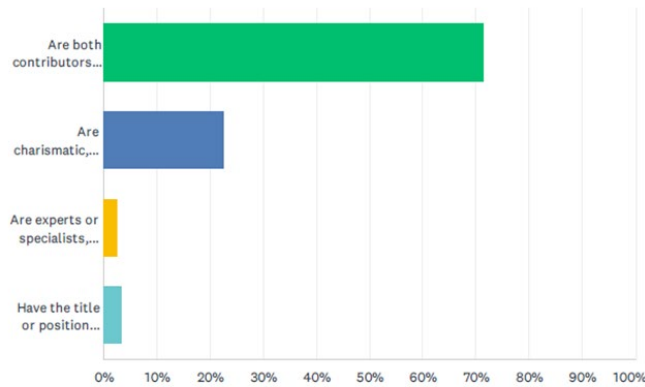
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Are both contributors and team players, who are an essential part of the team. People like working with them.	71.52%	108
Are charismatic, can inspire others, and are good at motivating others to develop their potential.	22.52%	34
Are experts or specialists, who have the most knowledge about something important.	2.65%	4
Have the title or position that gives them the right and authority to exercise power and influence.	3.31%	5
TOTAL		151

Survey Conclusion

The results of the survey suggest that respondents value the importance of respect, communication, and teamwork within an organization's culture. In addition, the results highlight the need for all team members to collaborate in creating a positive culture within the organization. Together, these findings point to the fact that although respondents recognize the importance of individual beliefs and values, communication plays a significant role in an organization's culture. According to respondents, an essential quality of a positive culture is respect. This characteristic aligns with the respondents' prominent belief that communication and teamwork cannot exist without mutual respect. Unsurprisingly, respondents in San Elizario Independent School District believe that the people with the most power and influence in an organization are both contributors and team players, as this statement best mirrors a culture of teamwork. Only five out of 151 respondents believe that titles or positions of authority hold power and influence within an organization.

Conclusion

Our actions reflect the culture we desire. Every individual is an active contributor to the organizational culture. Individuals contribute conscientiously or not. In trying times, what one believes to be the most insignificant action can have the most significant impact. For culture to be optimal, we must in every interaction be present and aware that culture is evolving every second. Much like breathing, culture is occurring whether we are aware of it or not. Culture requires action and for all individuals to realize and accept responsibility for the value they carry.

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It is imperative that women in higher education learn to promote and support each other within their organization. Looking to sustain leadership? Read on to explore how current women leader can mentor and support future female leaders using the 5 Anchors of Impact as a framework for creating a sustained leadership model.

Women Supporting Women: Using the *5 Anchors of Impact* as a Tool for Uplifting Women Leaders

Dr. Laura Trujillo-Jenks, Texas Woman's University
Dr. Rebecca Fredrickson, Texas Woman's University

It is somewhat saddening to visit a restaurant that serves lobster and see the uncovered tank of lobsters. The idea is to promote that the lobster is fresh, but the uncovered tank also demonstrates another, more fearsome concept. The tank is open but the lobsters do not escape. The reason being is that if one lobster starts to make an escape from the tank, the other lobsters will pull them back into the tank (Botteril, 2017). Applying this metaphor to women, sadly, the same can often be seen. As women work to succeed or rise within leadership positions, they are pulled back down by other women. This is referred to as the Lobster Syndrome.

Higher education and public-school education are not immune to the Lobster Syndrome amongst women in leadership. In higher education, there is an implicit aspect of competition built into the system. Scholarship, teaching, scholarship, service, scholarship . . . . often faculty are evaluated on what they produce in the scholarship arena regarding publications and grants (Huenneke, Stearns, Martinez, & Laurila, 2017). There is often less emphasis on the areas teamwork, collaboration, mentoring, and coaching.

In academia, faculty are often regarded only in how they produce (Huenneke, Stearns, Martinez,& Laurila, 2017) and collaborating with others is not always encouraged. Due to the competitive atmosphere in working toward promotion and tenure, collaborating or teaming with colleagues is usually encouraged if there is a clear benefit to the other faculty. Additionally, the work production, which includes the amount of grant money they bring into the university, how many publications produced, service on high level committees, or student evaluations is a very siloed and independent type of production. For women trying to be successful, it can be very discouraging if proper mentorship and guidance is not given.

Further, there is an additional demand for growth of the university through the awarding of grants and the development of research agendas (Mudrak et al., 2018; Bentley et al., 2013), which may increase isolation. This atmosphere of competition for faculty may seem ruthless and encourages self-preservation, and may lead to a deterioration within the academic climate for faculty (Teichler et al., 2013). For women, this could be disastrous since their voices could be muffled in academia instead of celebrated. Thus, the Lobster Syndrome continues and flourishes through this type of atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the trust that is needed among colleagues becomes absent due to strained relationships where trust is not felt or given. This atmosphere of competition also encourages a feeling of failure and insecurity. As Preuss (2017) stated for teachers who may find themselves working in isolation and who share commonalities with higher education colleagues, "I want teachers to… feel validated, loved on, and empowered" (p. 1). In higher education, this should be the sentiment also, where we have colleagues that build each other up, support, and guide them to successfully earn promotion, tenure, and advancement. In public education, there is more of a support system built where teachers across the country and world seek to support each other through sharing ideas, lesson plans, and other instructional materials.

In higher education, there is very little written about novice faculty and how they should navigate the high expectations of teaching, scholarship, and service. Specifically, there is very little written about how novice female faculty should engage in fulfilling the high expectations, and almost nothing that focuses on female leaders who are supported by their female colleagues. Academia is more than just teaching at a higher level. There are so many other facets to being an effective faculty member at today's universities. Fredrickson, McMahan, and Hansen-Thomas (2017) addressed the concepts and concerns with the expectations of new faculty:

> When entering into academia, new faculty members are introduced to the academic
>
> triumvirate: scholarship, teaching, and service. The expectation of junior faculty is often
>
> to be ultra-productive in all three aspects from day one; quality and quantity are expected
>
> in all areas. (p. 123)

These authors, like most, tend to leave out the expectations of female novice faculty and how to find support, collaboration, and mentorship from more seasoned female faculty or female leaders.

Working to find ways that women can support and guide other women in academia, specifically as leaders within organizations is important if there is to be efficacy for female leadership within higher education. Exploring how current women leaders can mentor and support future female leaders through the use of the *5 Anchors of Impact©* as a framework for creating a sustained leadership model within higher education. Examining this through the theoretical lens of critical urgency, there is an argument created for the need of this framework to build, mentor, and maintain female leaders within the academy. As the nation has undergone dramatic changes and explosive events, things of familiarity and safety were allowed to rise to the top instead of continuing to grow and develop. An example of this would be the rise of male leaders in academia since the pandemic (Dahlberg & Higginbotham, 2021). In the theoretical lens using critical urgency, the necessity of being proactive instead of reactive demonstrates that often organizations, such as higher education, tend to move more quickly into reactive modes instead of looking to be proactive, especially in leadership during times of stress or urgency (Brearley, 2018). Often the ability to be proactive can alleviate the need to be as reactive (Sangfroid Strategy, 2020). As higher education is looking to be more proactive instead of reactive within their leadership and implement women leaders mentoring other women into daily practice, it is important that critical thinking, thus critical urgency is addressed first (Love, 2020).

The *5 Anchors of Impact©* is a tool for leaders to use as they work through critical or urgent times, including how to create a climate of women supporting other women on a campus. The 5 Anchors of Impact are:

- ***Organization***
- ***Politics***
- ***Safety and Order***
- ***Traditions***
- **Teaching and Learning.** (Trujillo-Jenks & Fredrickson, 2020b, p. 3)

The 5 Anchors are a proven framework for leaders in the development of higher education culture. Through the lens of critical urgency, even during times of urgency or instability, using the 5 Anchors of Impact framework, can assist higher education to successfully navigate these waters while keeping priorities in place and not slipping back into what is easy (Trujillo-Jenks &

Fredrickson, 2020a). As the *5 Anchors of Impact* framework is adopted by more leaders in higher education, the hope is creating an open and collaborative space within higher education where women mentor and support other women. The 5 Anchors of Impact Framework follow with a brief description and examples of what they could look like in higher education.

Organization Anchor

It is imperative that women in higher education learn to promote and support each other within their organization. The **Organization** is the big picture, the main hub, and/or the main part that all other sub-organizations belong. There is a scenario that is seen in many organizations, not just higher education, where women who feel threatened look to sabotage other women who are succeeding. For example, as a junior assistant professor, it is not uncommon to feel isolated and nervous, especially as one sets out to learn the expectations of a university. What is not expected is to have other women purposefully block your efforts in succeeding by ignoring your requests for assistance or guidance. Another example is when women in higher education attain leadership positions and are not supported by other women because of jealousy, insecurity, or envy. So, how do we, as women, ensure this sabotaging stops, or better yet, doesn't begin within an organization?

First, we must remind ourselves that we must empower others and help each other in the pursuit of success. There are different ways to do this and the best way is to see ourselves as leaders. We are leaders in each aspect of our lives, especially in higher education, and we have areas that we are very knowledgeable and skilled. We need to think in this manner so that we see our own value.

Second, as we see ourselves as leaders, we need to see our effect on the organization, and sub-organizations, that we work within. As academic faculty and staff, we are leaders within our classrooms and offices, which are sub-organizations of the larger one (the university). Thinking about how we lead within our own organization and sub-organizations will help us understand the impact we have on others, specifically in how we conduct our jobs.

Lastly, as leaders of sub-organizations within our larger organization, we must understand the different leadership styles that can empower us and that can also help empower others. Although there has been so much research and articles written about leadership styles, it is important to acknowledge that leadership has many faces. As a leader, there is a time and place for a certain style with a certain situation and sometimes, several styles may be used in one situation. For example, with a new colleague, the directive leadership style may be appropriate in order to establish what policies and rules must be followed within an organization. Another example would be collaborative leadership to be used when it is imperative that all voices within a group are heard and valued. No matter the leadership style, empowering our fellow female colleagues and giving them the support they need is essential for all members of an organization to thrive.

Politics Anchor

As one promotes to a leadership position, they become politicians. What this means is that they must no longer be passive in understanding the policies, rules, and regulations that govern the organization because knowing these will help them combat any threat to their organization and sub-organization. The **Politics Anchor** includes external and internal forces that affect the organization in both a positive and negative manner. It can be anything that impacts the

organization and allows for decisions to be made for certain outcomes. The politics of an organization is important to recognize because those politics drive some people into either aiding or sabotaging others' efforts to succeed.

An example of how politics plays an important role within an organization would be to recall a time when a university had a no-confidence vote for a Provost or Dean. At one university, it took one vote to oust a Provost from office, while at another university, it took 4 different votes within a 3-year time period before a Dean was finally removed from her position. The main factor in both instances is politics. For the Provost, the faculty seemed to have more political clout within their organization because it only took one vote to have the Provost removed. There could be many reasons for this, such as access to media, Regents, or donors who could be persuaded to write something or make decisions about funding that could damage the university. In the case of the Dean, it seems that the Dean had more political pawns in her corner that influenced the university to keep her longer than the faculty wanted her. She was able to weather the disdain of the faculty due to her political protection from both internal and external influences.

What makes the Politics Anchor so interesting is the internal and external influences, because before you are in a situation that may seem dire, one never truly knows how or what will affect an outcome. For the Provost, being removed one month later after the vote of no-confidence was a shock and disappointment, but it illustrates beautifully how both internal and external influences can change an organization and the minds of those within or outside of an organization.

When focusing on higher education female faculty and staff, the politics may come down to gender: Which gender is seen as more promotable or more like a leader? This is when it is so important for women to help other women in being promoted to and succeeding in upper positions. Although it may be difficult at times to see one woman promoted over another, especially if the political influences are not reputable, the point that a woman can be promoted is a victory. The "how" she got promoted may cause others to back away from playing the politics needed for promotion, which can harm the probability of other women seeking promotions. Therefore, understanding the **Politics Anchor** and how it lives within an organization can only help women in higher education flourish.

Safety and Order Anchor

Rules, procedures, expectations, and policies, both written and unwritten, define the **Safety and Order Anchor**. This Anchor is important because it provides the security that those in academia should feel within their organization and should be provided through mentorship, coaching, support, and validation. When the safety and order are compromised, the probability of success is affected because a female in higher education may not know the rules of what is and isn't allowed or how to proceed with certain things in a proper and approved manner. Additionally, safety and order should be constant and not contingent upon certain accomplishments or quid pro quo.

When women feel secure doing their job in academia, they appear to be happy, productive in teaching, scholarship, and service, and they feel valued and validated. A safe and orderly environment becomes one where colleagues collaborate, mentor, and coach each other and do not feel threatened by each others' successes. It is an environment where colleagues flourish and are encouraged to flourish by their peers. A great example of this is when colleagues send notes of

congratulations when a peer has been awarded a huge grant, or when a colleague has received a deserved promotion.

An environment where safety and order are not present looks very chaotic and threatening. It can be one where leaders lead top-down and usurp others' ideas and accomplishments as their own. It is where rules are not followed, or even respected, and anything goes until it doesn't. It can be a place where colleagues are allowed to belittle and disparage others as they climb their ladder of success. Overall, it is a place where high turnover is common, unfulfilled positions stay open for months at a time, and people feel that their organization does not care about them.

It is unfortunate, but as has been reported in a informal survey, female faculty and staff have reported specific instances where they have been told that they aren't ready for a leadership role, that a promotion will not be given due to a candidate's perceived lack of diversity, or that a demotion will need to occur since a superior feels that a female leader "just doesn't have it". These types of sabotage contribute to an unsafe and disorderly environment. These types of gate-keeping also discourage other women to pursue advancement opportunities and enforce the thought that women do not support other women. To help ensure that all faculty and staff within any organization feel that the safety and order will be in support of them, it is good to remember that there are rules, procedures, expectations, and policies, both written and unwritten, that can be found within any organization.

The safety and order of an organization can be felt by outsiders who must audit or review an organization's outcomes. Therefore, the **Safety and Orderly Anchor** can be seen as the foundation that an organization rests upon, and which can be used to assure that an inviting and welcoming environment has been established. Understanding these and knowing how to promote safety and order is essential and can help make certain that all persons within the organization feel included.

Traditions Anchor

What makes an organization unique and what is held as important and even sacred describes the **Traditions Anchor**. Traditions are important because it tells the story of an organization, where it has been and where it plans to go, and it helps others identify what is important and not important. An example of traditions can be the Alma Mater sung at all graduation ceremonies, pep rallies before a big game, and homecoming each fall and/or spring so that alums may help celebrate the traditions established by the organization. Traditions can also be open and known, or hidden and secret. Examples of these types of traditions are monthly happy hours for certain groups of people within an organization, or certain dress or insignia that is worn to identify a certain group within an organization.

The point of traditions is to help those within an organization to feel a part of something and to feel validated as a member. For female faculty and staff in higher education, traditions can be seen as fun and inviting, a way to become a part of something great, and a way to make a mark in teaching, scholarship, and/or service. Traditions can be used to encourage conformity and individuality, and it can be used to promote both a healthy or unhealthy environment. With traditions, not everyone will be accepting of what is seen as important but recognizing the importance of traditions can help women encourage other women.

An example of this is a female pursuing a higher position and preparing the different presentations for the different audiences that she will meet. As this female prepares, other females become available to help constructively critique the presentations and give advice on how to approach the different audiences by telling what traditions need to be illuminated and how to address certain issues in a traditional manner. Especially if a female seeking the higher position is new to an organization, the assistance from more tenured females ensures that the traditions held sacred will be respected.

As one may have fond memories of high school or college days and as one remembers the traditions that were reinforced and created during the good 'ol days, it may be easier to reason why traditions would be important to those within an organization. For women working in higher education, it is always good to note the attention given to traditions because those are what help define the organization.

Teaching and Learning Anchor

So, how do we ensure that women in academia are given opportunities to succeed and flourish in academia? It is through the **Teaching and Learning Anchor**, which can look like professional development, filling leadership capacity, and/or and increasing the knowledge of those within an organization to help them feel like they belong. There are so many ways for teaching and learning to occur and allowing faculty and staff within an organization to find their preferred way is best. Therefore, it can look like a book study, a professional learning community, bringing someone in to present on a topic, and/or promoting someone's research by having that someone teach others how to lead successful research projects.

No matter what it looks like or how teaching and learning occurs, BOTH teaching and learning must occur. Teaching can occur at any time, and usually does when colleagues come together and discuss and contemplate on ideas. Therefore, learning is automatically an outcome where teaching is done because those who listen, contribute to, and ask questions are learning. So, teaching and learning cannot be separated and each can impact the productivity of an organization.

For women in academia, teaching and learning is a must because they help increase the level of understanding in any given topic and help educate to help improve the output of those within an organization. Teaching and learning also can help with increasing civility, ethics, while decreasing microaggressions and back-biting. It is a way to help everyone within a certain organization to get to know how each other works and how each other flourishes, and what is important for a set of colleagues. It allows for the building of a healthy environment and adds to everyone's knowledge about each other. Teaching and learning increases the capacity of what Preuss (2017) wanted for all teachers: validation, love, and empowerment.

Conclusion

The *5 Anchors of Impact*, which include Organization, Politics, Safety and Order, Traditions, and Teaching and Learning can help women to support other women. The 5 Anchors can help women to not fall into the Lobster Syndrome trap and even reverse that where women support and push each other up instead of down. Although more studies on how women can help other women feel successful in higher education is needed, incorporating the *5 Anchors of Impact* can help women

see the importance of the framework within their organization. It can also help organizations find ways to encourage teamwork, collaboration, mentoring, and coaching.

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Shared in this passage is the leadership pathway of the most famous female pharaoh, Hatshepsut (1508 BC – 1457 BC). While it takes on a different perspective, there are leadership lessons from her reign that holds true today as she provides us with a modern-day model for leading with strength and courage.

A Lesson from History: Hatshepsut's Leadership

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In 2017, we visited one of the third oldest civilizations, Egypt. Part of the trip included a visit to the temple of Pharaoh Hatshepsut, also known as Pharaoh Hatshi. As soon as we arrived there, we felt the glory and the sanctity of her spirit in the place. Many stories were written about this unique pharaoh who was unlike other female royals who were known as queens. Hatshepsut was, in fact, named Pharaoh– Pharaoh Hatshepsut. Her name means "foremost of noblewomen." She led the country for 21 years and 9 months. She was not the only female ruler; however, she was the only one who claimed the throne for herself while the male successor lived. You may be asking, "What does this ancient woman have to do with schools?" There are definitely leadership lessons that were apparent to us as we walked the same paths of this woman and reflected on her leadership. Now, we want to take you with us on these paths, as we share the life of the most famous female pharaoh (1508 BC-1457 BC) in history.

Hatshepsut's Beginning Path

Hatshepsut, the fifth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt was not the first female pharaoh, but she was the most successful pharaoh of her dynasty, regardless of gender. The first female pharaoh was Sobekneferu who belonged to the 12th Dynasty and who ruled for four years. Sobekneferu took the throne after the death of her brother, Amenemhat IV, who died suddenly and without having an heir. There was no evidence about the change during Sobekneferu's reign who was the last pharaoh of the 12th dynasty (Hassan, 1948).

Hatshepsut had a remarkable reign. As the eldest daughter of King Thutmose I, Hatshepsut married her half-brother when she was still a teenager, who later became the King Thutmose II. After the death of Thutmose II, she became the regent of her stepson, Thutmose III, who was too young to be Pharaoh, and gradually she took full authority as the pharaoh, taking the throne for herself from Thutmose III (Tyldesley, 1998).

Hatshepsut's Challenging Path: Her Early Reign and What She Did to Legitimize It

To rule as a female pharaoh in ancient Egypt was nothing less than miraculous. Hatshepsut purposely removed titles of a woman and took only those of the Pharaoh. Ultimately, she took off the female ending from her name ('t') and became His Majesty, Hatshepsu. The legitimacy of Hatshepsut's power and reign as a king with complete authority instead of a queen who should be wife of the king was under serious question and was fraught with challenges both from the traditional system itself and from those who were in powerful parties in the political system (Armstrong, 2017). Under such circumstances, several moves were made to legitimize her power. First, she knew that her legitimacy would not occur without confirming her god's blessing. Thus, she announced herself to be both the wife and the daughter of the god Amun, claiming that god Amun appeared to her mother in the form of Thutmose I and conceived her, which made her a demi-goddess (Bediz, 2007). This strategic move on her part positioned her as an invincible figure that developed her divinity. She gave herself a new name, Maatkare (The Soul of Re is Truth), a throne name that was designated for a male king that demonstrates honorable power

(Cooney, 2015). Additionally, she further justified her ruling authority and strengthened her position by claiming that her father, Thutmose I, had made her his co-ruler before his death.

Tradition was import in ancient Egypt, and the culture was male dominated. In the beginning, Hatshepsut required all the statues of herself to be shown as a male character with a beard (Laboury, 2014) and performing male actions with the body of man (Tyldesley, 1998). However, she allowed certain female traits to be demonstrated (Gay, 1999), making certain that the art also referenced her as a woman, such as "Daughter of Re" or "His Majesty, Herself" (Rizzo, 1996). Related to her femininity, Hatshepsut prepared the first kohl eyeliner, and this was the first recorded time it was used (Isaac, 2004). She used the resin of the charred frankincense to make it (Isaac, 2004). She was strategic, assessing her environment, and positioning herself within the cultural norms so that she legitimized her own power among the people (Bediz, 2007).

Hatshepsut: A Master of Policy

For many modern historians, Hatshepsut was not a traditional warrior-king who led wars to expand the territories, although some evidence suggested that her military ability may be underestimated resulting from the one-sidedness of archaeological evidence (Tyldesley, 1998). It had even been hypothesized that she commissioned Thutmose III's war against Kadesh. She was not a warmonger, but she positioned the armies of Egypt to be powerful and put Thutmose III, who was trained in military strategies, over those armies. It has been said that Hatshepsut expected that there would be a battle between Egypt and the Canaanites (the Kadesh), and she had prepared Thutmose III for this situation (Mark, 2017). Gardiner (1964) confirmed that she did not initiate any widespread military warfare during her reign, which somewhat weakened ancient Egypt's control over neighboring authorities. This non-aggressive attitude in ruling that disapproved of the use of violence made her foreign policy initiative a peaceful one. It was described more as the "one of unobtrusive control: active defense rather than deliberate offense" (Tyldesley, 1998; p. 278). Her reign was the only peaceful era in Egyptian history because she believed in leadership through active communication, conflict management, and conflict resolution.

Hatshepsut: The Diplomat

Even though Hatshepsut maintained a mild diplomatic strategy, in general, she did launch a successful sea expedition to Punt (suggested to be modern-day Somalia or Ethiopia), a perfect land as a trading post, in the 9th year of her reign, yet with intentions of trading missions (Tyldesley, 1998). This event helped re-established the trading network that had been disrupted during the Hyksos occupation of Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period and brought back numerous desirable treasures, which proved itself to be an excellent glory and further strengthened the authority of Hatshepsut's reign (Tyldesley, 1988). Some evidence suggested that it was the god Amun that encouraged Hatshpesut to send the trading expedition and promised its success (Naville, 2004), which, in turn, demonstrated that the Amun was not offended by the pharaoh being a female and guaranteed a great wealth and success under her full authority. Notably, she returned and increased trade, and in particular, Hatshepsut was interested to import regularly the luxury products such as gold, wood, seeds, skins, and leathers as well as new products such as eye cosmetics, incense, fragrance, perfumes, ebony, and ivory, live myrrh trees, and frankincense (Hassan, 1948; World Civilization, 2022). Because of her effective leadership, the economy improved, and foreign trade flourished.

Hatshepsut: A Long-Lasting Legacy

Hatshepsut erected four obelisks at the Karnak Temple in Luxor. Only two are left which we saw on our trip tracing this great Pharaoh. One of the inscriptions she wrote is evidence of her confidence, reputation, and legacy. It reads: "Now my heart turns this way and that as I think of what the people will say. Those who see my monuments in years to come, and who shall speak of what I have done." It is amazing that we even had the opportunity to view those obelisks, because her works and rule was almost wiped from the pages and artifacts of history by her stepson. There was a serious attempt from Thutmose III after her death to remove her name and achievement from the history in Egypt by destroying her monuments and portraits (Tyldesley, 1998). In fact, he tried to remove any trace or reference of her reign and noted that he was the ruler from the time of death of Thutmose I, discounting his stepmother and his regent, Hatshepsut. However, as the ancient Egyptians believed, a soul never dies if the name continues to be said, and it was not until the 19th century, when Hatshepsut's name was resurrected, and she once again came to life as the greatest pharaoh of all Egypt. Her outstanding deeds consisting of a peaceful domestic environment, successful foreign expedition, and monumental building programs make her undoubtedly an excellent model as a female leader.

Hatshepsut: Linking to Modern Female Leadership

Hatshepsut's extraordinary experience and leadership as a female pharaoh in ancient Egypt who ruled in absolute authority and power encountered challenges in terms of the legitimacy of her reign. As Tannen (1999) stated, "the pathway to authority for females is never easy, and even if they get there, it's a bed of thorns" (p. 224). Vial et al. (2016) proposed theoretically that the difficulties that female leaders face often originate from the low level of legitimacy perception; that is, women in power are less likely to be perceived as legitimate authorities, compared with male leaders. Even in the dynasty of ancient Egypt that *sometimes* was tolerant with female rulers (Cooney, 2015), Hatshepsut had to make major, extra efforts to achieve the legitimacy for her reign.

There are 10 lessons that we can glean from Hatshepsut who ruled one of the oldest and most influential civilizations, Egypt. The lessons for modern-day female leaders are as follows.

1. Be confident, courageous, and bold. She took the steps to name herself pharaoh which showed confidence, courage, and boldness.
2. Self-awareness is essential as leaders. Since she was a child, Hatshepsut was trained to be leader. She was mentored in diplomacy, philosophy, math, languages, and many sciences. These experiences built her leadership skills and gave her the ability to build a solid self-awareness of her abilities and competency to be the Pharaoh.
3. Build relations, not conflicts. Hatshepsut developed relationships with other territories and kingdoms and peaceful relations as opposed to war. She was aware that not only internal, but also external relationships mattered.
4. Be innovative and not afraid to try new programs. Hatshepsut brought a renewed period of art expression to Egypt. She also brought new trade and new merchandise to Egypt. She also created an expansive building program in which she led the planning and building phases.
5. Be a flexible and strategic thinker. Hatshepsut was flexible in her thinking and was strategic. Hatshepsut realized the fact that she could not compete with the public beliefs,

but she used these beliefs instead. Thus, she promoted the idea that she was sent and chosen by the god, Amun. She understood her environment.

6. Be persistent. Although she proclaimed herself as being chosen by a god, Hatshepsut was resisted by male dominant religion leaders. They did not interpret her successful peaceful foreign policy to her own leadership, but it was interpreted as a god's will. She persisted in the face of resistance.

7. Practice open communication and diplomacy. Hatshepsut's trade expedition to Punt engaged her with different cultures and races (Tyldesley, 1988). She was able to face that complicated situation with cooperative and participative communication within a complex, diverse group (Post et al., 2015).

8. Make tough decisions. Hatshepsut experienced making hard decisions much of her life prior to her becoming Pharaoh and during her over 20-year reign.

9. Be alert to your surroundings. Hatshepsut was surrounded by her own family who were not fully supportive, nor were other elites fully supportive. She was aware of this, and positioned family members in key positions to keep them close.

10. Have a vision and actualize it. Hatshepsut had a vision for building great monuments and temples. She actualized that vision and brought the people along with and employed the people.

Though this most powerful Pharaoh, His Majesty Herself Hatshepsut, lived thousands of years ago, she provides us with a modern-day model for leading with strength and courage.

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As you reflect upon your leadership style, consider what you provide for others. This leader shares what it takes to get others to follow. Where is your space in leadership and how does it impact others?

The Leader Within

Dr. Caprica Wells, Northeast ISD

Choosing a leadership style for an educator in the 21st century can be a daunting task when your desire it to be the best leader that you can be, while promoting growth in the people you lead. With varying styles of leadership to include hierarchical, transformational, and facilitative, the best decision for you can be challenging. Many analysts provide various breakdowns of leadership. Daniel Goleman states that we have different kinds of leaders: democratic leaders – encourager, pace-setter who sets examples, coaching – properly trains, visionary who drives toward a common goal, affinitive – believer who maintains progress, and commanding – authoritarian who alone has the power. Various approaches are then intertwined in the decision. Should one direct, coach, facilitate, or delegate. Trying to decipher of the various leadership styles was overwhelming. Which style would I choose? The journey became personal, and I began to look at various leaders that I have or have had. Which styles did they appear to have and what would I take away or add to ensure that I become the best leader I can be?

Some of the leaders have shown a multitude of various of most of the leadership styles that we have studied. Being led by a leader who reflects a hierarchical thinking leader was very frustrating.
With the lack of collaboration and a top-down approach, our campus was ineffective. Promising programs were implemented without having the proper people in place. It was not necessary that the people in place were incompetent, but the implementation of the program did not create campus buy-in. The new educators' creativity was stifled when they show interest with innovative ideas to compliment the program. Veteran educators were not going to give it their all since they had seen many promising programs from this dictator that came and went. The campus climate was unhealthy, and anything could push the staff into a frenzy. Some relegated to being the mediators, like I found myself doing. Can you imagine the impact this climate had on the students?

Finding yourself in a climate of participatory leadership can be as ineffective. When a leader is successful in seeking and encouraging feedback from subordinates, an atmosphere of collaboration can lead to an optimal learning environment for students. However, if the participatory leader is in a position where the subordinates do not trust the leader, the leader will not have support for decisions that could be made as a whole. A climate of indecisiveness can result when a leader constantly asks subordinates for their input. This is counterproductive to achieving any goals in a timely fashion. Educators can be left in limbo which results in multiple implementations since no clear direction is given. Isolation in one's classroom or area can result when the leader appears to be indecisive. The educators who are self-motivated are likely to move on and be effective; however, the ones who long for direction would be left in a state of limbo, trying to manipulate the resources they have. Without one effective direction, the ship will continue to move, but no one will know the destination.

Reflecting on my space in the world, the first inclination is to decisively choose servant leadership. Robert Greenleaf, who coined the phrase in 1970, said that in order to lead, one must serve. Because of my spiritual nature, this type of leadership fit my desire to caring and nurturing people. I want to help others to envision and create a better society for themselves and the world. Servant leadership empowers the employees. It gives me great pleasure to see others reach heights that were only in their dreams. Stephen Covey comments in a foreword for the book by

Greenleaf *Insights on Leadership* that it is a part of our human nature to motivate one another to a level that we would dream, but not seek for various reasons. A servant leader can tap into this human spirit to help it transcend into a natural force that the person may not be able to articulate on their own. Covey further recognizes a servant leader's power to help others unleash their human spirit that frees them to produce in every area: markets, organizations, families, and, most significantly, their individual life. He hypothesizes that servant leadership will be the deciding factor that will allow an organization's enduring success or its eventual extinction.

Servant leaders are responsible for their followers, especially those who are disadvantaged. I can recall in middle school one of my teachers stating that I was always arguing for the underdog. In high school I began to recognize the call for me to be the advocate of those who voices are normally silenced. It was in high school that I was involved in a heated verbal confrontation because others would not stop bullying one of my classmates. As I sat in the counselor's office, she informed me that I was an advocate for those with no voice; however, no one would hear me through my screams. Looking back, I see servant leadership as a natural progression in my life. Using principles of servant leadership will assist me in destroying the muzzles that seek to quiet the unnoticed in my professional and personal life.

Service is vital to success. In order to serve, we must take action in our circle of influence to ignite a promise of change. Using my skills, talents, gifts, and abilities to create something bigger that I am is very fulfilling. I am committed to helping create a community of collaboration that will nurture everyone involved to produce optimal learning environments for students and adults. This creation of newness must come from listening and responding to the needs of the people you serve. People want to be heard. A leader must be willing to listen to the needs of the people. This will help us to have an effective response. As we are listening, we should ask them how we can help, instead of throwing what we think they need together. This could lead to isolating the very people that we want to help. My reward comes from seeing people being fulfilled and living a life of purpose. In 1996 Greenleaf discussed that servant leaders require reflexive time to recharge and to reconnect with the deeper self, which is time that I see as a precious commodity. Since I was 12, I have been journaling as a way of release, but also to assess productivity in my life. Productivity in providing service measures your effectiveness, but it also shows that you care.

Most arguments against servant leadership are that it can be viewed as soft and easy, which could allow too many visions to originate causing confusion. A perception of indecisiveness can become a follower's reality when a servant leader is in deep thought about situations and appears to not be able to make an immediate decision. Because the servant leader can seem introverted and reflexive, they can be looked on by extroverts who always speak their mind, to not be good leaders. Humility is a key in servant leadership and has a biblical foundation. Leaders who proclaim that they are here to serve can be seen as aligning themselves with the bible, which could create issues based on the separation of religion and state. The validation of this argument is conjured up when analyzing Devri Pratt's 10 principle of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community. Those against servant leadership concepts go on to state that it is Christian leadership and has no place in education.

Mitch McCrimmon reflects on the two factors that he believes is emphasized in servant leadership: serving employees and being selfless. Treating employees as partners is better than

stating that you need to 'serve' them. He argues that serving people means that the leader has become subservient which does not produce a positive image for the leader. He also writes that while selflessness is a valuable trait to have, it does not have to be named or advocated. He argues that many professions, like doctors and nurses, are selfless without being leaders. Yet, we do not call them servant doctors or servant nurses. He contends that people can be selfless without being a servant. He summarizes with no one can lead others by serving them. A leader must lead by example and/or show a new direction for their followers. While I disagree with most of these arguments, it did stir up the need to search for an accurate style for me, which lead to a look at transformational leadership.

The transformational leadership style piques my curiosity because this leader seeks to get things done with enthusiasm and energy. Transformation of the organization as well as the leader's followers takes place via a vision that infuses passion and confidence in a renovated or newly created system. On the flip side, the same energy that motivated can also cause quick burnout. These leaders are such visionaries that they can forget the details which could lead to failure. I know that I have issues sometimes with this area. I have concluded that I will always have a detailed colleague, or mentor, to share my visions, in order for them to begin asking those questions involving details. Transformation leaders can also be so charismatic that they are seen as for this moment, and not having a future presence. This almost seems to describe the leader as being too superficial for me to digest; however, I do see myself as someone who can transform challenges into successful adventures. This leader is seen as very charismatic person with the speaking ability to move people emotionally, but not really get results for the task at hand. I do not want to be seen as just the one who can speak, but also a doer. True transformation will not take place without action. We are in a constant state of transformation in our professional and personal lives; we must continue to learn how to thrive in environments that we are given to transform.

Therefore, this quest of my leadership style leads me to surmise that true leadership emerges from within. When placed in a situation where service is needed or wanted, leaders rise to the occasion to complete the mission at hand. It is evident that leaders must have adaptability to change with the tides. The waves will come and go causing new seasons for a leader. The sustainability of the leader will be determined by the condition of the organization or school left after the waves. I can see myself practicing various leadership styles, using various approaches, depending on the situation at hand. Leaders must muster up the courage to make decisions when others refuse. Some might conclude that this is situational leadership. I still see it as servant leadership because you are assessing and responding to the different needs of your followers.

I aspire to be the effective leader who can get others to follow a clear communicated vision. Leading by example, my disciplined actions will help to communicate the dedication I have towards pursuing the vision. My personal pillars of character will keep me grounded in the mission. Integrity is a value that I hold dear and feel strength in not compromising it. Trust and respect will be earned through visible actions that I take to serve the needs of all stakeholders. An openness to other's feelings, ideas, and expertise will seal my effort of collaboration. Giving credit where credit is due emphasizes the importance of establishing growth in your followers by giving them a voice to continue the mission. I want to admit to mistakes that I will make, as corrections are made to ensure the error is not made again. Effective leadership also comes through the creativity and assertiveness of one with a mission that is laced with realistic goals. I strive to collaborate on setting goals that are measurable and can be adjusted based on the

outcomes. Humor is always to maintain a not as stressful environment. I have been told that I have a dry sense of humor, and firmly believe that a sense of humor can be a remedy to hostility or stress. Knowing this about me, and understanding who I am, my journey is complete. I am a proud servant leader, who understands that I must make the tough choices when needed. Although, a leader must carry many styles of leadership in their arsenal based on research and day to day operations, I believe that real leadership comes from within.

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PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

If COVID has taught us anything, it was that social disconnection or isolation was a contributing factor to people feeling depressed and lonely. When leaders spend time cultivating love, it bears fruit by developing people's capacity to accomplish the mission of the organization by becoming more responsible.

Let Love Influence Your Leadership

Dr. Elizabeth A. Clark, Birdville ISD

We are living in a tumultuous time. Feelings of hopelessness, anger, anxiety, and frustration are being expressed openly. The nightly news reports the sad reality. Outward hostility is shown towards our fellow man. We even see this evidenced in the games our children play on Saturdays. As a society, our very institutions are under attack. As a people, we are confused, bewildered, and baffled at what we can do to return to the days when civility was the norm. We ask ourselves, where are we headed and what can we do to prepare our children to be empathic and humane?

As I ponder these questions, I am reminded of the *Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37)*. Most everyone is familiar with this parable, but you might ask how it applies to leading and leadership. Considering how the Samaritan expressed love for his fellow man through kind deeds, it occurred to me that we as leaders may not be expressing love to those we lead. Do our children see us as loving them? Do our staff see us as leading with love? Do our actions speak of love? Simply saying I love you without actions to support the words is nothing but empty rhetoric. Love is not just a feeling. Rather, love is expressed through demonstrable actions. For instance, when we love someone, we want to demonstrate our love through our actions. In turn, when one demonstrates love first, the person on the receiving end feels loved. Love is a powerful force. It is fundamental to building a culture of trust, mutual respect, and binding commitments. As I contemplated this truth, the more I realized that servant leadership requires the leader to love first. This might sound corny or too touchy-feely for some, but service to others requires acts of love and compassion. Thus, the purpose of this article is to outline some truths about leading with love and to identify simple and appropriate things leaders can do to demonstrate love for those they lead.

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Ricciardi stood before his battalion of 1000 soldiers as they were preparing for deployment to Afghanistan, and gave them one simple message: "*You need to love one another*", (Johnson, n.d.). Upon his return to the states and subsequent work on his dissertation topic, Ricciardi wanted to focus on how love influences leadership. What we have learned through his research is profound. "*Team members who feel loved by their boss are significantly more likely to see their boss as a good leader*" (Johnson, n.d.). If leading is a natural outgrowth of love for staff, then what does that look like in the workplace? What do leaders do to express love without sacrificing the mission?

First, loving staff requires knowing and caring about those who you lead on a personal level. Lolly Daskal (2011) says, "*It is about caring enough to know what is important to them, what inspires them, and how to help them succeed*" (p. 3/9). Every staff member is unique and special. Thus, leaders invest in staff by taking the time to know each person and what makes each unique. This approach provides an important opportunity to validate each person, as well as make personal connections. In addition, when the leader knows each team member personally, then he or she is more likely to know when it is suitable to grant appropriate considerations. This personal touch makes people feel important, valued and appreciated. Something as simple as knowing and inquiring about team members' families communicates caring. The art of listening, and remembering special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries,

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children's graduations, or other special family events are actions that demonstrate, "I care about you".

Second, being positive and enthusiastic about the work is contagious. It is infectious and hard to combat. The words of Mahatma Gandhi, "*Be the change you wish to see*" (B'Hahn, 2001, p.6) rings true. Learn to look for the best in others. Create a culture where being positive is an expectation. It takes more energy to be negative than positive and positivity is habit forming. Negativity, when allowed to permeate the organization, becomes your identity. Leaders need to realize that their actions, and the prevailing actions of staff, are associated with the leader's identity. Self-reflection is a good place to start. Ask yourself, "What is my identity? How would people describe me?" If you are negative, then you will spawn negativity. If you are positive and enthusiastic about the work and people, you will become known for that and people will respond to you more positively.

One thing to remember is that leadership is certainly more than holding a leadership position. It is about building a strong team of followers that want to be led by you. Therefore, developing a cohesive team focused on accomplishing the goals is paramount. While the work may be difficult, how the team works plays an important role in providing the necessary encouragement, support, and passion to stay focused and productive. Again, this requires the leader to be intentional and purposeful in creating the right culture. Ask yourself, "Do I have a culture by design, or by default"? "Do I allow one or two individuals to poison the pond, or do I know how to redirect people's thinking? This approach does not minimize the need to know where problems or conflict exists. Quite the contrary. As leaders, we want to know what barriers prevent people from working at optimal levels so we can make improvements and provide the necessary support. The issue is how we talk about those things. Is there a venue and a protocol for bringing issues to the surface so that problems may be identified, discussed, and resolved? Leading with love helps to create a positive environment for problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Third, leaders are responsible for building commitment from team members. This is a complex leadership skill. It requires the leader to use processes for developing teams that trust each other and are committed to fulfilling the mission. The mission cannot be accomplished if the team is unwilling and/or unable. The leader must be able to diagnose the situation and provide the necessary support, coaching, mentoring, and teaching to have all team members able and willing to accomplish the mission. According to Riccciardi, "*strong leaders can link the task to a higher purpose, showing how the successful completion of the task influences the greater whole*" (as cited in Johnson, n.d.). Therefore, while service to others is how leaders express love and concern, the purpose of providing this service is always to achieve the moral and ethical imperative of the enterprise. Leaders are then the stewards of the mission and goals. Transformative leaders understand this and place great emphasis on delineating and communicating the values, beliefs, and goals of the organization, which in turn, define the culture, build unifying commitments and strengthen loving, trusting relationships.

As we enter the post-pandemic era, we have learned many lessons. One of the most important of which is the social interaction of people. We witnessed the impact that remote learning had on the social well-being of students. This carries over to adults as well. If COVID has taught us anything, it was that social disconnection or isolation was a contributing factor to people feeling

depressed and lonely. Humans need to feel connected, affiliated, and part of a team effort. These things are probably more important than the work itself.

In conclusion, love is a powerful and productive force that fuels the engines of productivity when people feel a strong sense of affiliation and connectedness to each other. We learn from the work of Brene Brown (2010) that,

We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we hone the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness, and affection.

Love is not something we give or get; it is something that we nurture and grow; a connection that can only be cultivated between two people when it exists within each one of them—we can only love others as much as we love ourselves (p. 26).

Thus, when leaders spend time cultivating love, it bears fruit by developing people's capacity to accomplish the mission of the organization by becoming more responsible.   It also builds healthy organizations which "*can function effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within*", (2003, p. 94). Ultimately, loving your people spawns loyalty, respect, trust, love, grace, and kindness within the organization. It deposits joy and authenticity into the social fabric of the organization. In simple language, the way you treat people is the way they will treat you and each other.

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As women, we select from all colors to paint our masterpieces. Every day is another opportunity for us to color our world! The colors reflect who we are and what we represent.

Creating a masterpiece: Women as artists of our lived experiences

Dr. Mariela A. Rodríguez, Ph.D., University of Texas at San Antonio

As women, societal roles and expectations weigh heavily upon our shoulders, we are expected to behave a certain way, to dress a certain way, and when we deviate from these expectations, we are "othered", systematically shut down in board rooms and research groups. Our maternal ancestors began the fight for equity, and we continue that fight. We do so through our female essence, and all that this includes. We are strong. We are confident. We are defiant! It is through our myriad of roles that we impact those around us on a daily basis. Yet, we must not lose our spirit as we support others.

I want to share some thoughts with you about how we need to remain true to ourselves, true to who we are as women. Artists have multi-colored palettes with paints of every color to create a masterpiece on a blank canvas. Each day is another opportunity for us to color our world.

As women, we select from all colors to paint our masterpieces. Sometimes we choose to paint with yellow to show happiness and joy. When we consider yellow as a bright color, we see the ways that as women, we bring joy to those around us. When we paint with yellow, we connect with each other through informal and formal conversations, but most especially through laughter. Have you laughed with your colleagues recently? Have you spread that joy?

By painting with yellow, we advance a positive movement in decision making, in research and in leadership. By showing this bright color and using it on the blank canvas, we display its many characteristics. The way they yellow is associated with other joyful things like sunlight and sunflowers. In this way, we demonstrate that joy fills our lives, and thus we are eager to share that joy with others.

Another color on our artist's palette is green. Green reminds us of the importance of healing. It shows the need to make time for contemplation and reflection in our busy lives. When we paint with green, we demonstrate the reflective process that has brought us to a decision or to a communication with others. We see this as an opportunity to engage individuals who need assistance or who seek our advice.

I see painting with green as a reflection of mentorship. Building community with each other, as women, is a form of healing. By painting with green, we demonstrate the commitment that we bring to a mentoring relationship. We see it as something that we must dedicate our time to, and therefore we show the value of _**womentoring.**_ [Let's keep women in this word!] There is so much value in staying connected to our mentors. It is these types of relationships that carry us forward and support us through our most difficult times.

Another color on our palette is red. Red is a color for passion that demonstrates what drives our commitment to promote healthier educational spaces for all with whom we work. We must consider not only children and students that we serve, but also the adults in our environments. How do we share our passion and drive with others? How do we share the motivation that the color red signifies?

As women, we have so many strengths and gifts to share that when we paint with red, we show the world that we are PRESENT! And with our inner light, we will help to guide the path for those that we serve. I encourage you to always kindle your light so that it burns brightly in each

interaction and not only in our oral communications with those here gathered at this wonderful conference, but also in your writing, in your research, in the ways in which you put pen to paper (or hand to keyboard). Display your inner light to show the passion that you bring to each endeavor.

Yet another color in our palette is white. White demonstrates a time for peace. As women, persons turn to us to be nurturers, to provide a sense of calm among chaos. When we paint with white, we show the ways that we can bring peace to groups, to gatherings, to points of contention. By painting in white, we bring that sense of calm that is needed. We are able to offer opportunities to stop, think, and reflect. As women, we understand how we must bring all in the group to that calm and reflective space so that the best decisions can be made.

Yet, painting with white reflects vulnerability. As women, our lives are exposed and transparent each day in every space where we walk. We may face judgments and negativity, but we always remain steadfast, knowing that greater things await us. While painting with white may be difficult, it is important for us to use this color widely because white reflects our peaceful spirits and displaying that vulnerability gives us that sense of calm that others need from us.

Another color on our artist's palette is blue. When we paint with blue, we are giving ourselves permission to take the time that we need to restore our spirit. It's okay to feel blue sometimes. It's an opportunity for us to cry, to show frustration, to take time, to hide ourselves away for a bit. When we paint with blue, we show to the outside world that while we may be on the quieter side of things on this particular occasion, we are using this opportunity to rest and recharge. Painting with blue shows us that we have that inner strength and inner motivation to move beyond what is troubling us and to make that positive change for the future. Because sometimes we simply need that respite before moving to the next color on our palette.

When we paint with purple we summon our creativity. Our contributions to projects offer opportunities to share unique ideas. Painting with purple gives us the strength to be daring, to try something that may make us feel anxious, or even afraid. This is when we feel innovative. By showing our creativity, we demonstrate our willingness to think and act outside the proverbial "box". But I challenge us to move beyond the confines of a "box" to dismantle the box altogether. In this way, we open a field of opportunity for all those around us. Through our actions we encourage others to share their creativity for substantial change in educational settings and more.

Orange is a color that is bright. It is a color that is powerful, and that is who we are. With orange, we signify our inner fire, that inner fire, that as women burns brightly, while societal expectations and others may try to silence that fire, we know that it burns deeply and that it burns rightly wherever we go. When we paint with orange, we showcase our strengths. We demonstrate that power to bring light to others.

When we paint with orange, we want to make bold statements, and as women working within traditional societal expectations, such behavior is frowned upon. When we try to be bold, we are often met with raised eyebrows or hushed whispers. Don't be deterred. We must paint with orange! We must make bold decisions! We must make bold statements because we understand that making these bold statements fosters momentum for the collective good. We understand how the decisions that we influence and the decisions that we make will affect the lives of others

everywhere. Thus, I encourage you to paint with orange often. Make those bold connections wherever you go!

As you move forward with your inner glow, I ask you to consider the ways that you paint these colors on the canvas. Sometimes we use long sweeping brush strokes. These long and sweeping brush strokes are opportunities for us to engage in efforts for reform and transformation. These long and sweeping strokes represent the times that we engage with stakeholders in research efforts and in spaces of decision making. Broad strokes are needed when change must occur!

Then there are times when we must bring a fine brush to the paints on our canvas. We use a fine brush to bring attention to details. We use this fine brush stroke to enhance even the smallest actions that effect change. So, when we consider our artist's palette of many colors and our brushes that are broad as well as fine, we see that as women, we possess the time, the talent, and the desire to paint masterpieces every day. Think about your own family, your children, and the children that we serve as educators. We have the opportunity to share the colors on our palette with the world. We take these talents and understand what this means for us in each project that we engage in, in each conversation that we have, and in each mentoring relationship that we engage in. These are reminders that we are women of strength. We are women of character.

Make sure that this fire that burns within us continues to glow. Use all of the colors in your artist's palette and apply different types of brushstrokes to continue painting on the canvas that represents our lives. I can't wait to see the masterpieces that you create!

CREATIVE WORKS

Dr. Elizabeth A. Clark, Birdville ISD

I see thousands of children
Spread out across this land,
Each of them with special needs and
Placed within our hands.

So many little faces,
Each with wondering eyes,
Eager, searching, believing, doubting
And ever asking, "Why?"

These children pass by daily,
Many without a name,
But still their plight is known to us
Although we treat them just the same.

Who among us will be their champion?
Who will take up their cause?
Who will pause long enough to say,
"Don't worry, you're not alone today."

You say "I'm only a teacher,
What difference can I make?
I can't even teach them all they need
Let alone, deal with their future fate."

Yes, it's true you are a teacher.
Oh! What a noble call you heard.
You have the power to heal the soul,
Unchain the shackles, open the mind's closed door.

Look! See the children that stand before you.
Each of them God's precious gift,
Pass on to them the torch of knowledge,
Help build a brotherhood of man.

You may not know you're their only chance
But a teacher can make the difference.